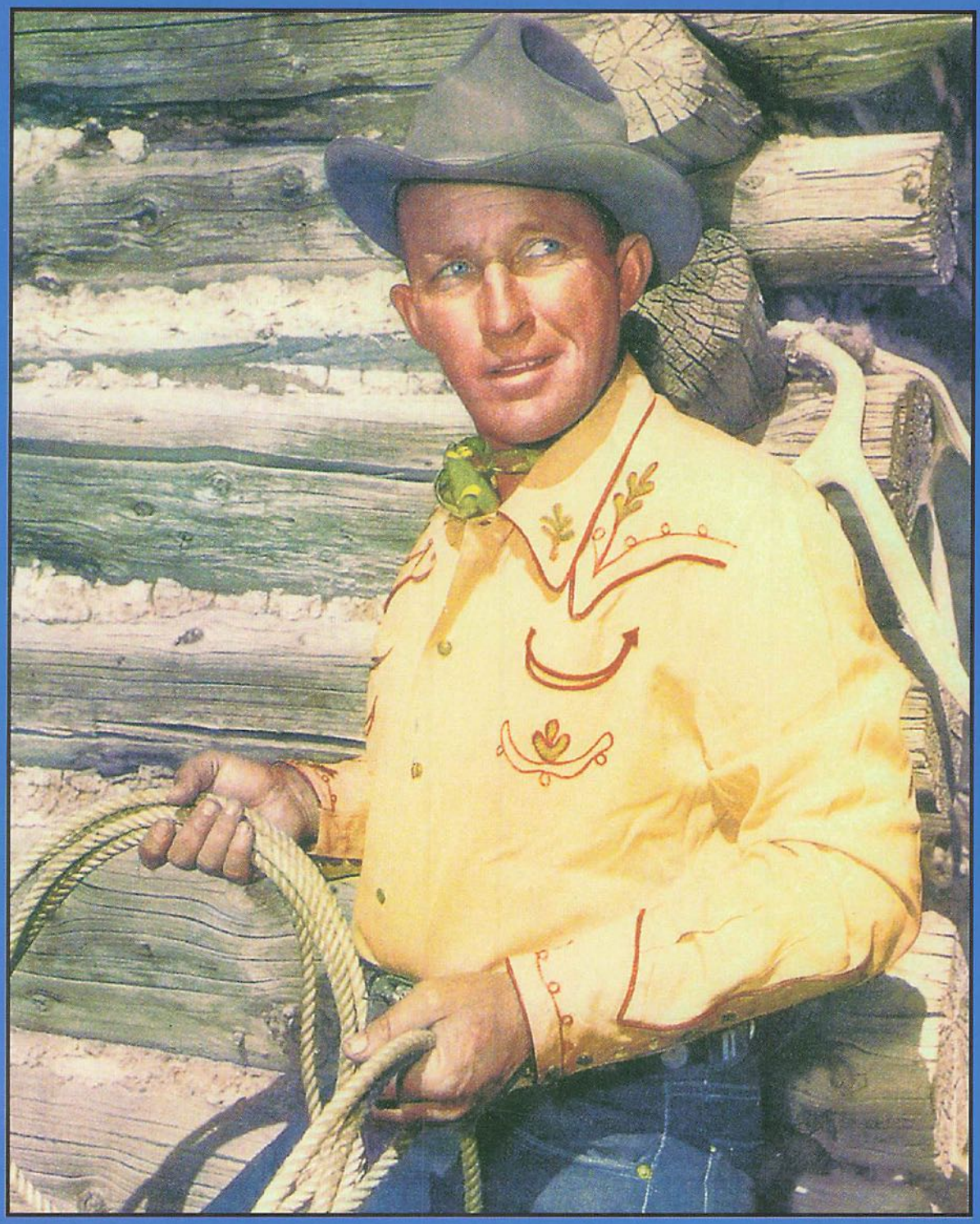
BING

SUMMER
2001

No. 128



THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

Founded 1950 www.crosby.circle.btinternet.co.uk
(also http.//members.aol.com/macwilmslo/BING_magazine.html)

Hon President	KATHRYN CROSBY	
MANAGEMENT TEAM		
Hon Secretary & Treasurer	MICHAEL CRAMPTON	19 Carrholm Crescent Chapel Allerton Leeds LS7 2NL Tel/Fax: 0113 2689556 e-mail: crosby.circle@btinternet.com
Magazine Editor	MALCOLM MACFARLANE	3 Osborne Close Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 2EE Tel: 01625 528942 e-mail: Macwilmslo@aol.com
U.S. & Canada Representative	F.B. (Wig) WIGGINS	5608 North 34th Street Arlington, Virginia 22207, USA Tel: (703) 241-5608
Australian & New Zealand Representative	DAVID CURRINGTON	34A Geoffrey Street Turramurra, NSW Australia 2074
European Representative	ETTY GITS	Karbouwstraat 7 4817 GB Breda The Netherlands Tel: 076 - 5719 804 e-mail: e.gits@hetnet.nl
Assistant Secretary/ CD Reviewer	JIM REILLY	27 Beaulieu Road North End Portsmouth Hants PO2 ODN Tel: 02392 666677 e-mail: jimreilly@freenet.co.uk
Films	KEITH PARKINSON	"Meadowcroft" Houghtons Lane Eccleston St. Helens WA10 5LD Tel: 01744 22248
Radio & TV (Current Developments)	BERT BISHOP	Tideway, 100 Imperial Avenue, Maylandsea, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 6AJ Tel: 01621 742144 e-mail: bishop@tideway.fsnet.co.uk
Radio & TV (Research)	LIONEL PAIRPOINT	86 Ellesmere Avenue Mill Hill London NW7 3HD Tel: 0208 959 3394 e-mail: lionelpairp@hotmail.com
Photographs Editor/ Archivist	RON BOSLEY	10 Fountains Avenue Simonstone, Burnley Lancashire BB12 7PY Tel: 01282 779924

CONTENTS

	Page Nos.
Editorial	4
Secretary / Treasurer's Report	5
Frank Sinatra Tops BBC Singer's Poll	6
"The Chase Is Everything"	7
Bing in the USA	8
The Final Crosby Golf Tournament?	12
The Reinhart Foodservice Pro-Am Golf Tourney	12
'Walk On By' to be shown on Bravo in the U.S.	13
Trading Post	14
Billboard's Back Pages	15
Celluloid Crosby	17
The A - Z of Bing's Movies	19
Hope, Crosby Paved 'Road' With Laughs	21
One Sweet Letter From You	22
Bings Mother Speaks	24
Books 'N' Bing	27
Lionel's Lines - "The Crooner Olympics"	27
The Hollywood Victory Caravan	31
Perry Como's Last Hurrah	37
Once in a While	40
Bing Crosby - The Final Round	42
Bert Bishop's "Bing On the Box"	46
Keeping Track	53
Moonlight, Magic and Bing Crosby Music	58

UK	£10 per annum
Mainland Europe, including Eire	£11 per annum
USA and Canada	US $20 per annum
Australia and New Zealand	A$30 per annum
South America	£15 per annum
Japan	£15 per annum

All remittances should be sent in **£ sterling** payable to 'Michael Crampton - ICC' with the exception of (a) US and Canadian members who should send their remittances in US dollars to F. B. Wiggins (b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars (c) Mainland European members (not Eire) who should pay Etty Gits in £ sterling. For addresses see inside front cover.

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor.
Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should be sent to the Hon. Secretary/Treasurer.

BING is the official journal of the International Crosby Circle and is published in the Spring, Summer and Winter of each year. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC. All original material © Copyright ICC 2001.

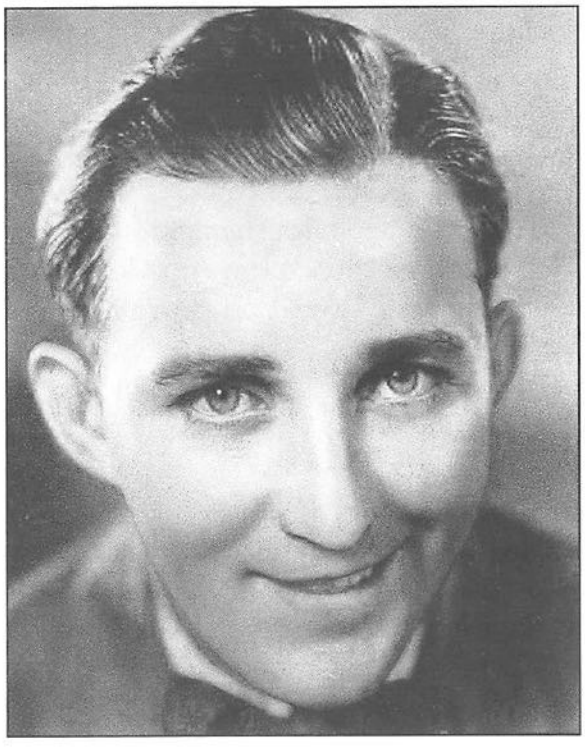
EDITORIAL

As some of you will have read in the latest edition of BINGANG, a committee has been formed by Club Crosby to study and decide on the way forward for that club as officers change in 2003. One possible option is a merger with the International Crosby Circle and tentative discussions have been taking place between Wayne Martin and myself, and subsequently Wig, about this possibility. Preliminary talks with us have dealt with the necessity of preserving Club Crosby's history, its American influence and input, its Club's and its newsletter's names, and the desirability of having American officers as well as overseas officers in place.

The ICC's response was that Club Crosby is rightfully recognised in the Guinness Book of Records as "the longest running fan club for a solo artist" and we must preserve this. A possible new title for the merged entity could however be International Club Crosby which retains the ICC initials. Ideally we would like to have the new club's magazine titled BING with the numbers of the magazine following on from the present ICC run. The question of American representation is also vital to Wig as Bing was after all an American. It is felt therefore that we would need an American committee (President, Secretary /Treasurer, distribution person etc.) as well as our existing management team.

However these discussions are still at an early stage and it would be helpful if we could have members' views on the matter. Please write or e-mail me or Wig Wiggins as soon as possible and we shall very much appreciate your input.

I mentioned in the last issue that I was writing a draft discussion "action" document in respect of Bing's centenary. I duly circulated this to thirty two people, being representatives of other Crosby clubs, members of our management committee and other interested parties so that we could co-ordinate our efforts to bring Bing back to the notice of a wider audience in 2003. The response was mixed to say the least but several people put a lot of thought into the matter and came up with some useful ideas. The most important thing we can do is to get a mini-series about Bing aired on TV in the USA but to do this, you have really got to go in through recognised agents, writers or producers. If any of you have such connections, please see what can be done to interest the TV networks in a major production about Bing. We also need to have as many contacts with record companies as well in order to get CDs issued and anyone who can help in this regard please let me know. I will publish the 'discussion document' in the next edition of BING by which time it will have been tidied up a little.



The expanded version of my diary, which will be titled "Bing Crosby - Day by Day" is to be published by Scarecrow Press in the USA before the end of the year. I will supply further details in the next edition of BING.

Michael Crampton covers the sudden and tragic death of Michael O'Toole more fully in his section but as one who worked closely with him and his team on two publications, I would like to add my own tribute to him for his enthusiasm, his creative ideas and his sense of humour. He will be sadly missed and we send our sincere condolences to his family on their sad loss.

There is plenty to read in this edition and, yes, Lionel is back. Ken Crossland says our farewells to Perry Como, Greg Van Beek adds a fascinating article about Bing's final day on this Earth, all of the regulars are here and there is an in-depth look at the Hollywood Victory Caravan. One of the many letters Gord Atkinson received from Bing is reproduced on our inside back cover and an insert gives details of the 2002 calendar which Jim Reilly has kindly agreed to put together for us.

Our annual meeting at Leeds will take place this year on October 7 and Alan Fisher has said that he will be pleased to come along and speak to us again as long as health problems do not intervene. Another special guest will be Mozelle Seger who worked for Bing for 27 years as a personal accountant and we have invited her to speak to us as well.

Malcolm Macfarlane

SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

Summertime, being a quiet period for Crosby enthusiasts, is a good time to reflect on how best the ICC can provide a continuing good service for its members in the years ahead.

Malcolm has outlined the details of a committee that has been formed by Club Crosby to explore various possibilities, and a merger of Club Crosby and The International Crosby Circle will be considered along with other suggestions. These are early days but members views will be appreciated on the best way forward. I fully support the idea of a truly international club dedicated to "carrying Bing's torch" as Kathryn Crosby has succinctly put it and look forward to closer and enthusiastic rapport amongst Crosby enthusiasts around the world.

NEW MEMBERS

It is a privilege to extend a warm hand of welcome to the following new members and we trust that they will enjoy their association with the ICC.

Danny Flies (Belgium), Richard Fox (Brixton, London), Mrs H. E. Challon (East Acton, London), Gillian Kelly (Kilmarnock, Ayrshire), John Buttery (Middleton, Manchester), Mrs G. Thompson (Southend-on-Sea), Ken Tootle (Ecclestone, St. Helens).

DONATIONS

The ICC could not survive without the generous donations that members continue to give in addition to their annual dues and we thank the following for their gifts.
Mr R J Cane of Dulwich, London and Mr J H Unwin of Broadstone, Dorset.

DEATHS

With sadness I must draw members attention to the demise of the following members:

Bill Gears (Wigan, Lancashire), **Bill Molyneux** (Great Sutton, Ellesmere Port) and a dear friend, father, husband, benefactor and Bing promoter **Michael O'Toole** of Kilquade, Co. Wicklow. Ireland.

His friends and family held Michael in special affection and his premature death has come as a great shock to us all. Michael ran a successful business and yet found time to promote Bing and his work over the fifty years that he was a member of the various Crosby clubs. Michael was a great reader and he collected a great treasure store of entertainment literature. This love of reading he communicated to others to encourage them to find out more about Bing's vocal art. Michael believed passionately that what united Crosby enthusiasts was Bing's unique and 'magic' voice. Michael's love of his subject was communicated to us via his professional production of the various Bing books that he produced on behalf of the ICC and these books we will treasure in the years to come.

It was a privilege to have known Michael, to have been in his company and we extend our sincere condolences to Joan and Michael's family.

Leeds 2000 - Michael O'Toole receives a certificate commemorating fifty years membership of the ICC from Michael Crampton.

Bill Gears was a Bing enthusiast from his youth and continued his interest during the war years when he served as a sapper. Bill died four days short of his eighty-first birthday and we extend our condolences to his family including his great grandchildren.

MEMBERSHIP

In the last issue of BING, I reported that forty-five members had still to renew their membership and I can report that this number has now reduced to nineteen, thanks to splendid appeals from Jim Reilly. As postal costs rise, financing BING will probably only be possible with increased subscriptions but we will always keep increases to a minimum consistent with keeping the balance of funds in the black.

NEW CD's

As you will read in "Keeping Track", Robert Parker and ASV Living Era have produced several fine CDs. Robert Parker has achieved a very good sound with his *Song Hits from the Movies 1930 to 1953* and interestingly the tracks can be listened to in either stereo or mono. Mono is only possible if you have headphones which switch stereo or mono. The difference is remarkable and the mono sound is

Robert Parker
CLASSIC YEARS IN DIGITAL STEREO
BING CROSBY
Song Hits From The Movies 1930 to 1953
24 Classic Tracks
including
Swinging on a Star
Where the Blue of the Night
Is You is or is You Ain't Ma Baby
Only Forever • White Christmas
Pennies From Heaven • Please
The Road to Morocco
Sweet Leilani
Nimbus Records

truer than the created stereo. Jim has the full reviews.

Until winter, enjoy your magazine and best wishes to all readers. I hope to see as many of you as possible at Leeds in October.

Michael Crampton

Frank Sinatra Tops BBC Singer's Poll

This was the headline in an Associated Press release last Easter after the BBC ran a poll to find the 20th century's greatest voices. Frank Sinatra topped the list of the 100 voices of the century, compiled by BBC Radio 2 using a variety of data including votes by listeners and a panel of singers and music experts. Elvis Presley came in second and Nat "King" Cole was third. Fourth and fifth spots went to jazz great Ella Fitzgerald and to Bing. This is a marvellous achievement so long after Bing's death and I would like to thank all of our members who took the trouble to vote. I had put an appeal on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum as well as sending a chain e-mail asking fans to vote and the result of this co-operation is very pleasing indeed.

The complete top twenty was:

1. FRANK SINATRA
2. ELVIS PRESLEY
3. NAT 'KING' COLE
4. ELLA FITZGERALD
5. BING CROSBY
6. JOHN LENNON
(The Beatles & solo)
7. ARETHA FRANKLIN
8. BILLIE HOLIDAY
9. BARBRA STREISAND
10. FREDDIE MERCURY
(Queen & solo)
11. ROY ORBISON
12. PAUL McCARTNEY
(The Beatles, Wings & solo)
13. DAVID BOWIE
14. BOB DYLAN
15. RAY CHARLES
16. LOUIS ARMSTRONG
17. DUSTY SPRINGFIELD
(The Springfields & solo)
18. MICHAEL JACKSON
(The Jackson 5, the Jacksons & solo)
19. SAM COOKE
(The Soul Stirrers & solo)
20. CLIFF RICHARD

Other notables in the top 100 were:

23. JUDY GARLAND
25. PEGGY LEE
27. AL JOLSON
31. TONY BENNETT
42. DEAN MARTIN
51. DORIS DAY
54. AL BOWLLY
60. MARIO LANZA
65. PERRY COMO
68. ANDY WILLIAMS
74. ENRICO CARUSO
90. DICK HAYMES
95. FRED ASTAIRE

So as you can see, it was quite an achievement to get Bing to the number five position. Thanks again to all who voted.

Another important Internet poll was the A & E (www.biography.com) vote on our favorite classic crooner and we were able to choose from Bing, Dean Martin, Perry Como and Frank Sinatra. With suitable publicity on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum, many of us piled in and probably voted several times with the following very pleasing result.

Bing Crosby - 48.3%
Dean Martin - 27.7%
Perry Como - 14.2%
Frank Sinatra - 9.8%

BING TO THE RESCUE (AGAIN)

In Australia, the Sydney Morning Herald of May 31 carried a report about Bing's voice again being used to deter rowdy young people. We quote:

The crooners and classics are being called to the aid of the residents of an upmarket inner-Hobart development. It is hoped the broadcast of the music of last century's matinee idol, Bing Crosby, and softer classical composers will drive rowdy young people from the Salamanca Square district.

The Hobart City Council said yesterday it had the

full support of the square's exasperated luxury apartment residents for the trial.

"You might get 200 people or more gathering there in the evening and a small amount of them show general drunken behaviour, " said Alderman Darlene Haigh.

"We think they would find Bing Crosby a bit of a drag. It's not that we're implying he's not any good. It's a case of choose your music." She said the trial, to begin in the spring, would test music at a volume loud enough to be heard by people walking in the square, but not by the residents.

"We also thought of testing special lighting, which makes people's pimples and acne show up. Apparently that makes them feel pretty awful too and they go. But we decided we didn't want to affect all the people who were there."

There's no such thing as bad publicity.

Savoy Theatre dreaming of a White Christmas

London's Savoy Theatre is to stage a version of the 1954 film musical *White Christmas*. The show will open at the theatre on September 24. BINGANG magazine carried a review of this stage show in its Winter edition and we look forward to the London opening as hopefully it will give Bing some useful coverage.

Who Wants To Be A Millionaire

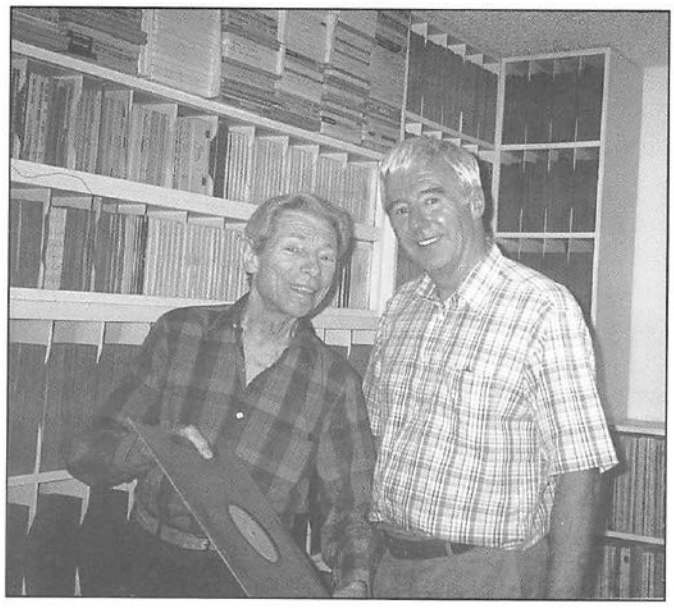
George Beschen spotted a Bing question on the celebrity Millionaire show televised in the USA on May 9. Here's George's account as seen on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum site:

> A question concerning Bing's nickname stumped actor Jason Alexander at the $500,000 level on last night's celebrity "WWTBAM." The question: What inspired Harry Crosby's friends to nickname him "Bing"? Alexander cut the choices down to two options:
>
> A. A dinner bell
>
> and C. a comic strip.
>
> Alexander polled the audience; some 60 percent went C. Alexander said his heart went with A. He didn't want to risk it, so he stopped there - as I, and millions of knowing Bing fans, groaned!

"The chase is everything."

On a recent holiday in Florida, Norman Wolfe and I visited the legendary Howard Levine in Coral Springs. Howard was frequently mentioned in Dr. Mize's book about Bing and it has often been said that he has the best collection of Bing's recordings in the world.

As a young man, Howard built up a formidable collection of Bing's records and Joe Franklin interviewed him on his radio show about this whilst Howard was still a student in 1945. Jack Kapp of Decca heard the broadcast and contacted Howard direct and they arranged to meet. Mr. Kapp was very kind to Howard, allowing him to see all of the workings of Decca in New York and he was even permitted to see the "mothers" which are the special discs used to create the masters used for pressing purposes. Mr. Kapp arranged for Howard to meet Bing in November 1945 and in later years, Howard attended recordings of Bing's radio shows in New York.



Howard Levine (left) shows your Editor a rare 16" transcription disc of the King of Jazz soundtrack.

Howard is a New Yorker and he worked for Decca from 1953 to 1966 and was responsible for producing the *Bing's Hollywood* series. In talking about this, he laughed as he said how difficult it was to write the sleeve notes about Bing's early films which he had never seen. He had to carry out extensive research in order to be able to put the sleeve notes together.

Howard moved to Florida eighteen years ago and now aged 73 he doesn't feel up to packing and shipping records in the event he's going to move. So he's decided to make plans for the disposal of his record collection although he is determined not to break it up. It must be one of the most complete Bing collections in the world and he has over 4000 Bing records including every commercial record of Bing's (plus many alternates) plus every V disc featuring Bing, plus transcriptions, box sets of all types, LPs and so on. He tells me that virtually every record is 'mint'. The enthusiasm for collecting is still there however and Howard explained that, to a collector, "the chase is everything" and he has clearly had a lot of fun amassing his incredible collection. The collection is immaculately set out and any record can be quickly found.

Howard Levine had always been a slightly mysterious figure to me and it was a real delight to meet him and view his marvellous collection.

Malcolm Macfarlane

BING CROSBY'S HILARIOUSLY FANTASTIC HAIKUS

Helen Rutherford, 1 Swan Lane, Bunbury, Tarporley, Cheshire CW6 9RA (aged 13) wrote to advise us about this offensive Internet site which uses Bing's image inappropriately. I duly advised Kathryn Crosby as she has the legal power to stop this kind of abuse and developments are awaited.

BING IN THE USA

NEW BING CROSBY COMPACT DISCS

One of the largest mail order companies in the United States, Collectors' Choice Music, regularly features Bing's latest CDs in its monthly catalogs, both American releases and foreign imports. From time-to-time, Collectors' Choice also issues CDs on its own label that honor big bands and singers from the 1920's through the 1950's that otherwise cannot be found in music stores across the country.

In its May 2001 catalog, Collectors' Choice announced the reissue on CD of ten of Perry Como's previously unavailable RCA Victor LP albums, poignantly just shortly before Perry's death. As a result, I contacted Gordon Anderson, Vice President of Collectors' Choice Music, to ask if they might consider doing something similar for some of Bing's LPs that have yet to find their way onto CDs. To my pleasant surprise, Gordon Anderson told me that Collectors' Choice already had plans to issue one album of Bing's Columbia/Brunswick sides from 1928-1933, most of which are not currently available on CD in the United States, as well as a second CD featuring Bing's two Capitol albums from the 1960's: "That Travelin' Two-Beat" (with Rosemary Clooney) and "Bing Sings The Great Country Hits". The Bing/Rosemary duet album has only been issued previously in Australia (and is now out-of-print), while the Country Hits album has not yet appeared on CD anywhere in the world.

Both of these Bing CDs are scheduled for release in July, unfortunately too late for Jim Reilly to review them for this issue of BING. But I will assure that Jim covers them in our Winter issue.

The advance announcement about these two CDs in the June 2001 Collectors' Choice Music catalog is incorrect regarding several of the titles to be included on the one entitled "Bing Crosby-Lost Columbia Sides." In particular, the advance catalog listing indicated that this CD would contain a long-missing recording, "From Monday On" made by Bing with Frank Trumbauer and Bix Beiderbecke for OKeh in 1928 (master number W400033-A). Unfortunately, this has led to extensive speculation on the Internet about the availability of this much sought after recording, all of which has been based on erroneous information. I contacted Sony Music in New York, which is producing the CD for Collectors' Choice, about this subject and learned that the master for the OKeh version of "From Monday On" could not be found in the Columbia vaults and is now assumed to be completely lost. The title had been included in the preliminary track listing only in hopes that it might be found, but that was not the case. So all of the Internet excitement, unfortunately, was much ado about nothing, to quote an old bard out of context. Three other titles from the advance listing also will not be included in the released CD. "When My Dreams Come True" by Paul Whiteman features a vocal by Jack Fulton, rather than Bing. And two concert-style Whiteman recordings, "La Paloma" and "La Golondrina", will be replaced by tracks with more identifiable Crosby vocals. By the time you are reading this issue of BING, the actual Sony-produced CD will be available, so that Crosby collectors will know for certain what tracks are, and are not, included. However, because of all the Internet attention, I wanted to clarify the situation "for the record", so that everyone would know exactly what happened to "From Monday On".

I will be following up with Gordon Anderson of Collectors' Choice Music about the possibility of their releasing other Bing Crosby CDs in the future, perhaps utilizing some currently unavailable Decca/MCA tracks from the 1940's and 1950's. Please stay tuned for further details in BING.

BING!

CROSBY AND AMERICAN CULTURE

November 14, 15, 16, 2002

HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY
HEMPSTEAD, NEW YORK 11549

HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE

Plans for Hofstra University's academic conference on Bing's life and career are progressing rapidly, and the official "Call For Papers" has already been sent from the Hofstra Cultural Center to leading academicians and experts throughout the United States to request outlines of their proposed presentations. The deadline for the submission of outlines is January 1, 2002. and complete papers will be due by June 30, 2002. All papers will be judged by an expert panel to determine which will be presented during the conference itself, that will take place at the Hofstra campus on Long Island, New York on November 14-15-16, 2002.

Dr. Ruth Prigozy, Professor of English and Film Studies at Hofstra, who is serving as Conference Director, visited with my wife, Laura, and myself in late April, during which we reviewed a draft version of the "Call For Papers" prior to its publication and discussed other aspects of the forthcoming conference. A copy of the official "Call For Papers" is either enclosed or has been already sent for the information of each ICC member, and additional copies are being sent to other Crosby organizations for distribution to their members as well.

I am pleased to acknowledge that the excellent drawing of Bing which was done by fellow ICC member Jon Oye of Chicago has been chosen as the featured illustration for advance publicity about the Hofstra Conference, including the enclosed "Call For Papers". Our thanks to Jon for this, and for his other excellent art work honoring Bing that we have all enjoyed in recent years.

As I have mentioned previously, all ICC members are cordially invited to attend the Hofstra Conference, and I hope that many will be able to do so. Hofstra University will provide me with details about transportation arrangements and hotel and restaurant accomodations in the area, plus other pertinent information, for publication in the Winter issue of BING. For those not familiar with Long Island, the Hofstra campus is in the city of Hempstead and adequate hotels are available nearby, so that those traveling from out-of-town will not have to stay in New York City itself, unless they prefer to do so. Watch for the necessary information about making reservations in our next issue. The Hofstra Conference promises to be the major event leading to the celebration of the centenary of Bing's birth, and it will be well worth attending.

BING'S ORIGINAL DISCOGRAPHER

In 1944, as a young teenager, I managed to come up with enough spending money to buy my first phonograph record, Decca 23484, that provided me with two popular hits of the day: "Don't Fence Me In" and "Pistol Packin' Mama" by Bing and the Andrews Sisters. And thus began my efforts to collect all of Bing's commercial recordings. For

several years thereafter, it was largely a hit and miss proposition. I had no idea how many records Bing had made, but I knew that I had almost two decades of lost time to make up. So I subscribed to various music magazines and began to respond to the record auction and sales lists that they featured. Finally, in 1950, I saw an advertisement for a discography of Bing's recordings for the amazing price of only $2.00! And what an invaluable treasure it turned out to be. For at least the next ten years, "CROSBY ON RECORD" became the indispensable guidebook for myself and other Crosby collectors all over the world. Although eventually succeeded by more detailed discographies from other sources, "CROSBY ON RECORD" remains very close to my heart as a collector, for it pointed the way down the long road of collecting Bing's recordings that remains a great pleasure for me even after all these years.

Recently, I learned from my good friend and fellow ICC member, David Doré, of San Francisco, that the moving force behind "CROSBY ON RECORD", Ed Mello, remains alive and well in the San Francisco area. In working on the discography back in the 1940's, Ed and his co-author, Tom McBride, had relied on the assistance of many other active Crosby collectors, one of whom was Rico Doré, David Doré's father. Through his father, David had gotten to know Ed Mello and has maintained a personal relationship with him over the years. So I asked David if he would like to prepare an article about Ed Mello and his pioneering discography for BING, so that other ICC members might read this unique story. David was pleased to do so, and here is the result.

"Crosby On Record"- The First Of It's Kind

By David Doré

I am sure many of my fellow ICC members will agree that numerous friendships have been made as a result of either being a Crosby lover, collector, or some combination of both. Over the years, Bing seems to have been a link that gathers like minds together. Coincidentally, all of the Crosby people I have come into contact with, who are serious about their hobby, are most pleasant individuals. Conversing with any one of them seems to be a salve for the difficult time we live in, with all its stress, troubles and trials. For myself, I am fortunate, for as long as I can remember I have had the extreme pleasure of knowing and being blessed with a most wonderful friend, an extraordinary human being, Ed Mello. There are some of you out there who might have had the pleasure of making Ed's acquaintance. If you have, consider yourself lucky, for there are not many like him around any longer.

Ed has been a Bing collector since 1941. At the outset of his hobby, he was extremely surprised to learn that the early Crosby recordings were already drawing top dollar. This did not deter him from pursuing what had become a passion, completion of Der Bingle's commercially recorded collection. Because of his love of the Crosby voice, and good music in general, Ed naturally gravitated toward the music business. After World War II had ended, he decided to open a record store. Commencing in 1946 and continuing through the early 50's, Ed owned a store called Mello's Music. Mello's Music changed locations three time's during that span of years. The constant contact with those glorious 78's increased his knowledge and put him into contact with the serious collectors of that era. At the time, auction lists were in abundance. Record trading between record hobbyists of different countries was a common and frequent thing. That medium served to shore up many American and English record collections. By 1950, Ed had achieved his goal and completed his Bing collection. Four years earlier, however, the actual contents of the complete Crosby collection were still in doubt. One evening during that same year, Ed and four other friends were sitting around listening to music when the suggestion came about, "Why not put together a discography of Bing Crosby"? And so, as simple as that, with Ed as the leader, the project was started on the first ever of its kind. An article in the November 25, 1946 edition of the San Francisco Chronicle, written by the legendary Herb Caen stated, "Ed Mello, king of the S.F. record collectors, is preparing a book called, "Bing Crosby: A Discography," which for the first time will list every record made by Dr. Crosby". On a recent evening, I sat with Ed Mello as he told me

the story of the "Crosby On Record" project.

First, let me start by saying that Ed is the master of understatement. He always makes everything sound like it's not much of a problem at all and really doesn't take credit for the good that he has done over the years. The year was 1950 when Ed along with fellow collector, Tom McBride, decided to take the issue seriously of putting together the first Bing discography. Ed had already determined that the best starting point would be the Decca catalog. Bing, of course, was still recording for Decca at the time, so it seemed to be the most logical conclusion. Luckily, there was a Decca outlet on 6th Street in San Francisco. He spent a great deal of time compiling the Crosby information from their catalogs. Please remember that at that time lap top computers were still 35 years from being available to the public. So, every piece of information had to be hand or type written. If you are old enough to remember those forms of communication, you will realize the laborious task this was.

Next came the much more difficult task of securing accurate information on Bing's recordings from the pre-Decca days of 1926 through 1934. This was a joint effort, which required the full attention of Ed Mello, Tom McBride and some twenty-five other Crosby collectors, including several from Australia and England. Earlier I stated that Ed had completed his Bing collection by 1950. So, I asked Ed how he knew the collection was complete, and if it was complete, wasn't it simply a matter of just listing it down on paper. His answer let me know that wasn't the case. His, along with all other individuals who claimed complete Bing collections, was simply a result of gathering every record they absolutely knew contained Bing. However, up to then no individual had ever taken the time to authenticate the information, which surrounded these recordings, as well as provide a FULL list. The joint efforts of all these collectors are as important to Crosbyana as the Continental Congress was to the United States. The gathered information of these collectors, along with numerous unnamed individuals from around the world, all shared the knowledge they had gained from years of experience, listening to and researching recordings. The task did not end there, as all recordings in question had to be further researched for Crosby content, obviously those that were notated as "with vocal refrain" on the labels of band recordings such as Whiteman, Lanin, Dorsey Brothers, Ipana Troubadours, etc. Even alternate takes, American re-issues and foreign issues were included in this landmark book. Since that time, of course, a great deal of additional information has been found. But, up to that point in Crosby history, no such document existed

There were actually two editions of "Crosby On Record" printed. The first was printed and financed by family. Ed decided to try to widen his audience and took a copy of this first edition to the Crosby people. Ed set up a meeting with Larry Crosby, who was the head of Crosby promotions at the time. Mr. Mello was delighted to find that Larry was pleased with the effort. Larry assured Ed that Bing would be equally pleased with his work and decided to finance the printing of a second edition. 2,500 copies were printed. The Crosby organization paid for the entire printing costs, including mailing the entire output directly to Ed in San Francisco. Ed again utilized his collector friends as his target group of buyers along with advertisements in various music magazines including the most popular trade magazine of the time, "The Record Changer". Ed says sales went well. Crosby Enterprises never asked for a dime in return. After completion of the project Larry Crosby continued to keep in contact with Ed, utilizing his knowledge of Bing and the record business in general. Most of these letters were originally addressed to Bing, requesting the groaner's assistance with their personal record collections. And then came a small glitch. A letter from Larry dated February 2, 1951 states,

> "The discography turned out fine, and Bing is well pleased. According to Bing, the first record he made was with Don Clark's Biltmore Hotel Orchestra in Los Angeles in 1926 or 1927 for Columbia - he thinks with Al Rinker. Do you have any record on this?"

Ed did not. Nor did any other collector. So, the one and only error caused the research and search scenario to start again. This time Herb Caen wrote again in the San Francisco Chronicle, "There was only one flaw in the collective ointment. They couldn't find the very first record ever made by Crosby". The article goes on to explain how a collector later found three copies of "I've Got The Girl" in one record and two antique shops. This was all done without knowing the actual title of the recording. That record was the last piece of the puzzle and final item authenticated for years to come.

Ed does not remember the exact time frame, but he did meet Bing at a Chesterfield radio broadcast in San Francisco. Ed still cannot exactly tell me what Bing said, other than he was extremely enthusiastic about a discography being written about him. He also mentioned that he was so amazed with Bing's command of the English language and level of sophistication that he was simply left in awe of his hero. During this time, Ed became somewhat of a celebrity in San Francisco. His large record collection allowed him to assist in producing KYA radio's "Music For Young Old Timers" as well as guest hosting several times.

Today, Ed remains a Crosby enthusiast. He still gets excited over newly found Bing recordings and to

this day is looking for a early 1930's air check of Bing singing "On the Wrong Side Of The Fence". He remembers hearing it as a young man and is still in hopes that someday a copy will turn up. Now, that is a true Crosby collector.

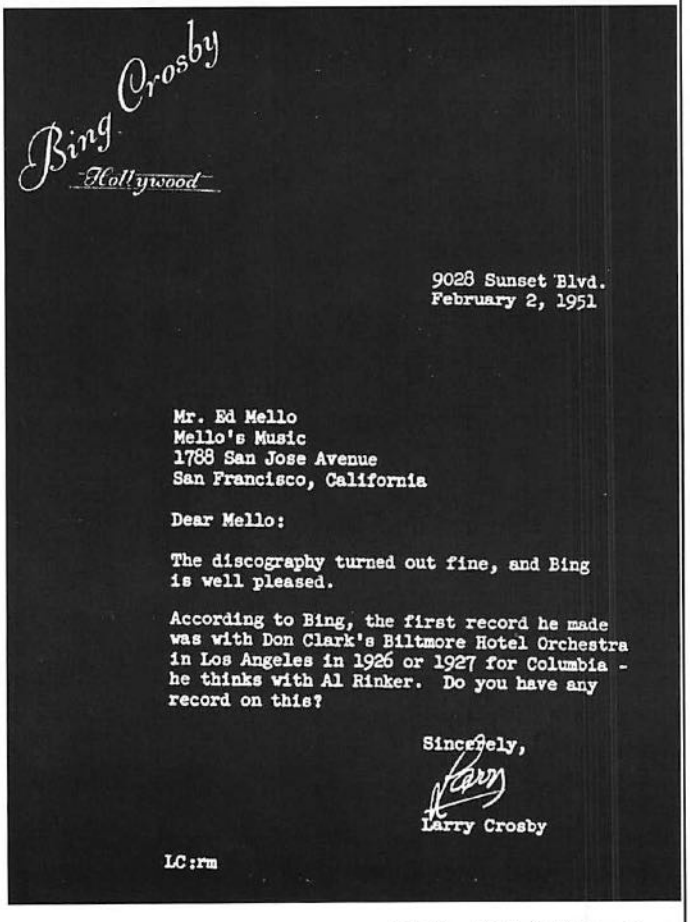
Many times in this world, we do not adequately remember or thank those who have paved the way before us. So, Ed, for giving us an invaluable source of Bing information that many of us still use and will continue to use for years to come, thank you.

David Doré

AFTERWORD

The story of the discovery of Bing's previously unknown first recording, "I've Got The Girl", as a result of the publication of "CROSBY ON RECORD" is a familiar one today, but it was a sensation back in 1951. Here is a reproduction of Larry Crosby's letter to Ed Mello which started the famous, and eventually successful, search.

My personal thanks to Ed Mello, and to David Doré, for this fascinating look back at the early days of discographical research into the details of Bing's recording career. And to our fellow ICC member, Ed Mello, who is now into his ninth decade, I can only say: "Well done!" Without your pioneering efforts, much of what we know today about Bing's commercial records would hardly have been possible.



Bing Crosby
Hollywood

9028 Sunset Blvd.
February 2, 1951

Mr. Ed Mello
Mello's Music
1788 San Jose Avenue
San Francisco, California

Dear Mello:

The discography turned out fine, and Bing is well pleased.

According to Bing, the first record he made was with Don Clark's Biltmore Hotel Orchestra in Los Angeles in 1926 or 1927 for Columbia - he thinks with Al Rinker. Do you have any record on this?

Sincerely,
Larry
Larry Crosby

LC:rm

F. B. (Wig) Wiggins
June 18, 2001

The Final Crosby Golf Tournament?

"The CROSBY...A name that recalls the proud heritage of one of America's best loved entertainers and the premier celebrity charity golf tournament in the country. No other tournament can boast the rich history that is The CROSBY. From its humble beginnings in Rancho Santa Fe, California, through its many years at Pebble Beach, to its current home at Bermuda Run Country Club near Winston-Salem, North Carolina, the tournament that Bing Crosby created has grown into the most exciting event of its kind."

That is how the publicity on the Tournament's web site commenced for the 2001 tournament which was played May 31-June 3 at Bermuda Run Country Club. It marked the sixtieth playing of The CROSBY, and sadly its sixteenth and probably last year at Bermuda Run. I gather that the major sponsor has indicated that it would not be renewing its support.

Since 1986, over $18 million had been distributed to more than 650 charities nationwide. The golf tournament's focus this year was on substance abuse prevention and education. Proceeds helped fund innovative programs such as the CROSBY Scholars Community Partnership.

It may well be that we are seeing the end of an era in which the tournament's achievements have been nothing short of remarkable. The huge charitable donations, the nationwide TV coverage when the event took place at Pebble Beach and the many stories and legends surrounding the social events which took place. Bing would have been proud to see that the CROSBY was still alive in the new millennium. Whether the CROSBY will re-surface elsewhere is not known at this time, but let's hope it does.

The Reinhart Foodservice Pro-Am Golf Tourney

On Thursday, July 12, our President, Kathryn Crosby, hosted this golf tournament at Turtleback Golf Course, Rice Lake, Wisconsin for the benefit of the University of Wisconsin-Barron County, Scholarship Fund. The event included a "Swing with Bing" Noon Luncheon featuring Bing film clips and a music salute. Greg Van Beek was there and sends his report:

Ron Hall of Festival Films in Shorewood, Minnesota e-mailed me in mid June about an upcoming golfing event at the Turtleback Golf Course, Dining and Conference Center in Rice Lake, Wisconsin that Kathryn Crosby would be attending. Since I'm not a golfer, and since Rice Lake

is a good five hour drive from here (it's over on the northwest side of Wisconsin, and I live in the southeast corner), I was a little skeptical at first. But my skepticism was quickly met with excitement when I found out there was to be a noon luncheon entitled "Swing With Bing" that Kathryn would be attending, and speaking about Bing! At a cost of only $10 for the opportunity to meet Mrs. Crosby, I couldn't pass it up!

My dad and I drove 285 miles one way to attend this event, but it was well worth it. It was a pleasure meeting Arne Fogel, Bob Deflores, Ron Hall, and of course Kathryn Crosby. She was very gracious to everyone, answering questions, taking time to sign autographs and pose for photos. Very easy to talk with.

Arne had a wonderful display of Crosby memorabilia, and gave a most interesting talk about Bing. I learned from him that they asked him that morning to speak, and he had nothing prepared. You never would've guessed it from the totally professional job he did. Bob showed some rare film clips, and it was almost surreal seeing Kathryn watch herself thirty-seven years before singing "Dream" with Bing. Among the other gems, including the

Greg Van Beek meets our Hon. President

golfing sequence from *Variety Girl* with Bing and Bob Hope, Bob Deflores provided a nice tribute to the late Perry Como by screening the song medley from Perry's Kraft Music Hall TV show in 1960 with Bing. Ron Hall was there selling movie posters, dressed quite appropriately in a Hawaiian shirt, a la Bing. After the luncheon, at 2pm and 3pm, more Bing films were screened downstairs, including the Wayne and Shuster look at Hope and Crosby, and Edward R. Murrow's *Person to Person* interview with Bing at home in 1954. Bob Deflores sat next to me, and we had a nice chat all about Bing while enjoying the popcorn and films. A very nice man, who knows an awful lot about classic films and preserving them.

(l to r) Arne Fogel, Kathryn Crosby and Bob Deflores

Later, from 4-6pm there was a wine tasting with a silent auction. One of the silent auction items was a painting of Mount Rushmore. The artist painted Bing as one of the faces on Mount Rushmore! Afterwards, at 6pm, there was a barbecue dinner. My dad and I had to leave before the wine tasting, at about 3:45pm, as we were heading to another town for an antique auto show the next day, but we left with some beautiful memories. It's a day I won't soon forget!

Greg Van Beek

'Walk On By' to be shown on Bravo in US

In our last issue we gave details of a wonderful BBC television series about the history of popular music and we are delighted to see that this has now been picked up by the Bravo channel in the USA. The press release commences:

For eight weeks this summer, BRAVO will bring viewers on a century-long journey through the history of popular music via the U.S. Television Premiere of POPULAR SONG: SOUNDTRACK OF THE CENTURY, an 8-part series featuring contemporary and archive interviews and performances from the most well-known names in music - a total of almost 150 writers, performers and producers who have individually and collectively made an indelible mark on the history of modern music.

A compelling history of the popular music which has been the soundtrack of the past 100 years, from the songs sold as sheet music on Tin

Pan Alley at the turn of the 20th century to the billion dollar pop industry of today. Featuring an unrivaled list of contributors and contemporary and archival footage from every era of popular music in the last century, POPULAR SONG: SOUNDTRACK OF THE CENTURY is a chronicle of the development of the modern music industry on both sides of the Atlantic. From Bing Crosby to Elvis Costello, Irving Berlin to the Beatles, they're all here in this sweeping look at the history of popular song.

A different title to the one used in the UK, but Part Two is the one to watch for Bing. Happy viewing!

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

G. D. Hamann, 2365 Scarff Street, Los Angeles, California, 90007, USA. (e-mail: gdhamann@juno.com)

BING CROSBY *COVERING ALL BASES:* G. D. Hamann's latest compilation from Los Angeles newspapers covers Bing's entire career from the 1920s through the 1970s. It is one of the larger books of the series. The cost is $29.95, $3.00 S&H for United States orders, and $6.00 (Priority Mail) for foreign orders, please make foreign checks and money orders payable in U.S. funds. Other new booklets of interest are BOSWELL SISTERS In the 30's and RUSS COLUMBO In the 30's. These books are $15.00 each, $1.00 S&H for U.S. orders and $3.00 S&H for foreign orders.

Mrs. Doreen Cheetham, 12 Hill Close, Northend, Southam, Warwickshire C47 2TP (tel. 01295 771007)

Mrs. Cheetham is selling her husband's record collection and there are some real treasures within it. There are well over 100 LPs including the bulk of the rare Australian Crosbyana set plus Spokanes, Totems, Bing's Hollywood and the Musical Autobiography. Contact Mrs. Cheetham for details.

Malcolm Macfarlane, 3 Osborne Close, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 2EE, UK (International Tel. 0044 1625 528942)

I am looking to purchase several items on behalf of a friend:

1. The booklet which accompanied the Victor 78-speed "Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Album" (P-4).
2. The cover for the Decca two-record album "Ballad For Americans" DA-134 (note that this is the drop-automatic issue not the original A-134 issue). My friend has two covers showing A-134 and will, if necessary, gladly swap one for the DA-134 version as well as paying a cash difference.
3. HMV B5509 Lovable (with Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra - reverse Non-Bing)
4. English Brunswick: 02144 Some of These Days
   02144 Moonburn
   02499 All You Want To Do Is Dance (No picture label)
   02499 It's The Natural Thing To Do (No picture label).

Ralph S. Harding, Crosbyana, 67 Shirley Drive, Heolgerrig, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid-Glam, S. Wales CF48 1SE, UK (International tel. 0044 1685-371411)

Ralph wants to sell his extensive collection of 12 inch Bing Crosby LPs including many boxed sets, all in mint condition and including the following:
14 Totem LPs (Nos.. 1002 to 1022)
32 Spokane LPs (Nos. 1 to 32)
13 Jonzo LPs (JZ 1 to JZ 13)
13 Limited Edition Club LPs (1001 to 1013)
20 "Christmas" LPs each featuring Bing Crosby
250 American and British LP records of Bing Crosby
Please contact Ralph for any LP records you need for your own collection

Mrs. G. Jones, Colwyn Bay, North Wales, UK (tel. 01492 516543)

Mrs. Jones is having to dispose of her husband's extensive collection of 78s. There are over 300 Bing 78s plus many of Gene Krupa and Spike Jones amongst others. Please contact Mrs. Jones direct.

Arthur Blood, 597 Osmaston Rd., Derby DE24 8NE, UK

Arthur now has available the new Bing Christmas 2001 stamp at £3 per 20 inclusive of postage to UK members. USA members can order from Wig Wiggins, price $5 for 20. Also Arthur has produced a nice Bing key ring which is shown below. This can be purchased for £2.50, direct from Arthur.

Stan Woodford, 6 Mariam Gardens, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 6QA, UK (tel. 01708 445049)

Stan has on offer many VHS (UK format) video items and film song compilations of Bing that may be of interest. SAE for lists please.

The Record Centre, 45-46 Loveday St., Birmingham B4 6NR, UK (International tel. 0044-121-359-7399)

Ray Purslow and his team are real supporters of the Crosby cause and for your Crosby CDs (and LPs), contact Ray. You can do it all by phone and pay by credit card if you like. It couldn't be easier.

BING BINDERS

Keep your magazines in mint condition by storing them in these specially made binders. They have blue covers with BING in gold on the spine and hold 10 copies, which allow them to either be inserted or removed, yet also open flat for easy reading. Costing £6.99 inc postage, £7.99 to Europe, £8.99 elsewhere, they are available from Ken Mason, 12 Wycomb Grove, Melton Mowbray, Leics. LE13 1EQ

Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby organisations.

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,
Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 236 Andrieux St., Sonoma, California 95476-6909, USA (tel. 707 996 0257 - e-mail Erinssmile@earthlink.net - Web Site address http://home.earthlink.net/~erinssmile/

Club Crosby, BINGANG
Wayne L. Martin, Editor
435 So. Holmes Ave., Kirkwood, Missouri 63122, USA
(e-mail: ClubCrosby@aol.com)
(Members in Europe should enrol via Ken Crossland, 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull, B93 8LP)

The Victorian Bing Crosby Society
Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130.

Internet sites:

Bing Crosby Internet Museum:
www.kcmetro.cc.mo.us/~crosby/

The Immortal Talents of Bing Crosby
http://www.geocities.com/crissi_n/bing.html

****

OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

Sinatra Music Society, 183 Summerfields Avenue, Halesowen, West Midlands B62 9NU, UK (phone:0121-421-7714)
This Society produces a most impressive magazine on a bi-monthly basis and includes features on all artistes performing quality popular music. The annual sub for UK members is £12 and write to Des Davis at the above address for details. Web site address: www.sinatra-ms.com

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418)

Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 13 Sunnyside, Heckmondwike, W. Yorks WF16 0LN, UK

Pat Boone Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 63, Sunderland, SR1 1PN, UK

The Doris Day Society, 31 Kirkfield Rise, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9DX, UK

The Deanna Durbin Society, c/o Mrs. Jutta Fagan, 13 Mayfair Court, Mayfair Close, The Ave, Beckenham, Kent BR3 5EL, UK

The Al Jolson Society, c/o Richard Selwood, 5 Abbotsfield, Wiveliscombe, Somerset TA4 2SU, UK

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email:tony@flias.globalnet.co.uk)

The Dean Martin Association, P. O. Box 80, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1ZR, UK

Billboard's Back Pages

Pat Shields from Studio City in California kindly sent me a page from Billboard magazine of April 28 which contained an article by Bradley Bambarger titled *Billboard's Back Pages* which contained some interesting facts and figures about Bing. The article is therefore reproduced here with grateful thanks to Billboard magazine.

B - B - B - BING: Although many of us have forgotten, none other than swing-era bandleader/clarinet icon Artie Shaw advised people to remember that Bing Crosby was "the first hip white person born in the United States." Gary Giddins uses that quote as an epigraph in his peerless new biography *Bing Crosby: A Pocketful of Dreams - The Early Years, 1903-1940* (Little, Brown), which emphasizes Crosby's role as not only a golden-age entertainer but a real show-business revolutionary.

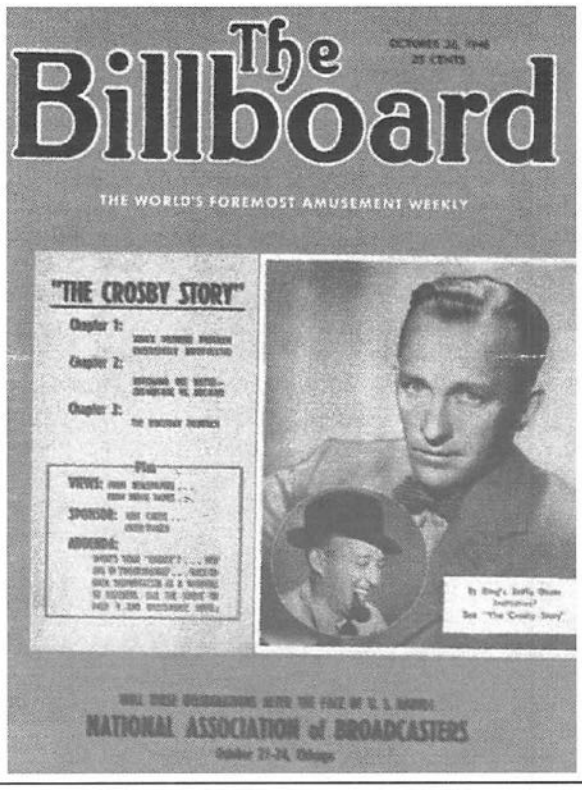
There are some astounding statistics confirming that Crosby wasn't just hip but a multimedia superstar to outdo any we have today. As a vocal soloist, he notched 38 No. 1 chart hits (more than the 24 by the Beatles and 18 by Elvis) while making more studio recordings than any singer in history - and selling some 400 million of them before his death at age 73 in 1977. Crosby was also a world-class celluloid attraction, from his Academy Award-winning role in 1944's *Going My Way* to his endlessly popular string of "Road" movies with Bob Hope. But as a star of the radio waves, Crosby remains unrivaled. He was a radio fixture across three decades, appearing on nearly 4,000 broadcasts. And it was one of his postwar programs on ABC that at a single stroke transformed radio into the modern medium as we know it.

Apropos of these unprecedented broadcasts, Crosby appeared on the Oct. 26, 1946, cover of *Billboard*. The trade newspaper ran a remarkable package of stories examining the implications of Crosby's *Philco Radio Time*, which was the first network program to be presented as an electrical transcription (e.t.) - that is, as "canned" rather than live programming. The show's great success with affiliates, audiences, and other artists - drawn to Crosby's distinctive vocals, consummate musical taste, and famous ad-lib charm - moved radio from revolving around real-time shows to being driven by prerecorded performances (captured on wax discs in this era).

Crosby was well-positioned as the country's prime radio draw at this time, as he was coming off his star turn in *Going My Way*, four *Billboard* No. 1 singles in 1944, and two more chart-toppers in '45 (all on American Decca). In the weeks before his new show debuted at 10 p.m. EST Oct. 16, 1946, "the Groaner" had a top five collaboration with the Andrews Sisters in "South America, Take It Away." Moreover, the Philco-sponsored program was heralded by a $1 million promotional campaign - the biggest in radio history to that point.

By the next week's issue, *Billboard* had covered the Crosby program from every angle, reporting on the expected ramifications for musicians' unions, talent agencies, advertisers, competing networks, record makers, and other top-name artists. That's not to mention gauging the audience acceptance of the first major "platterized" series, over which the entire entertainment industry was holding its breath. As a nation-wide Billboard survey conducted with the C. E. Hooper ratings firm determined, it was all history - 75% of polled audience members felt positively toward Crosby's prerecorded half-hour, during which he sang solo and bantered with such guests as his cinematic partner Hope. The front-page headline was "Bingle's Transcribed Angle."

ABC beat elder rivals NBC and CBS handily with Crosby's show, jumping into the big leagues. Yet *Billboard* raised the question worrying networks at the time: If sponsors themselves could pay an artist to record shows and then market the discs


The Billboard

THE WORLD'S FOREMOST AMUSEMENT WEEKLY

"THE CROSBY STORY"

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of BROADCASTERS

directly to individual stations around the country, then who would need radio networks? Obviously, the webs continued to thrive, enjoying such wax-era bonuses as being able to store up shows for the summer off-season.

Of Crosby's artistic peers canvassed by Billboard, none was more enthusiastic about the advantages of prerecorded broadcasts than young crooning sensation Frank Sinatra: "Transcriptions are definitely the coming thing. I hope Crosby is successful, because he's paving the way for others. As nearly all of us experienced in doing command performance transcriptions for service-men, recorded shows are perfect. You can cut out fluffs, gags that didn't go over, etc. I just don't like the idea of cutting e.t.'s too far in advance, because I want to sing tunes on each week's show that are currently popular."

In an editorial titled "Prefabricated Showmanship," Billboard staffer Leonard Traube judged the charismatic Crosby as "something you buy with your eyes shuttered." Presciently, he went on to caution against a trend that would come to haunt broadcasting (and, eventually, in-the-flesh performances) up to our day. "There are not too many Crosbys around, but with the improved techniques of e.t. programming that will surely come, fissioned by the know-how and savvy of which Crosby may be accepted in time as a pioneer, there need not be a personality to make mike entertainment more lush. It could be - and probably will be - that the personality will be subordinated to the show as show."

SCREEN RADIO MUSIC STAGE

VARIETY

Published Weekly at 154 West 46th Street, New York 19, N. Y., by Variety, Inc. Annual subscription, $10. Single copies, 25 cents. Entered as Second-class matter December 23, 1905, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.
COPYRIGHT, 1945, BY VARIETY, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

VOL. 161 No. 4 NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2, 1946 PRICE 25 CENTS

BING'S BANGUP BOXOFFICE IN '45

400G FROM DECCA RECORDS ALONE

No other figure on the show business horizon has managed to parlay his multiple pix-radio-music talents into the gross yearly earnings as that wrapped up by Bing Crosby during 1945. That he's the hottest guy in show biz today is reflected in the unprecedented royalties (more than $400,000) from the 1945 sale of Decca records. Add to that the current jockeying among every top advertising agency in the business and the top bankrollers in radio to latch on to Der Bingle's radio services in the wake of his Kraft Music Hall divorce, plus the record four-week grosses racked up by the Radio City Music Hall, N. Y., for his current starrer, "Bells of St. Mary's" (those 7:30 a.m. lines of customers circling the Rockefeller Center theatre building have been one of the top attractions for New York holiday oglers), and you can credit El Bingo with copping, hands down, all laurels for emerging the one-man industry in show biz today.

As Decca's all-time disk grosser, the Groaner has recorded during the year virtually every pop song that struck the public's fancy. It's by far the top royalty slice to any disk performer in modern times, and maybe of all time, with the current Crosby

(Continued on page 28)

Bing's Bangup B.O.

Continued from page 1

fan wave making him ever potentially bigger in '46.

Crosby's 10% Disk Deal

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Crosby is said to have a royalty deal with Decca which gives him 10% of the retail price of every record sold (his disks retail at 50c.). On that basis, the 400G royalty total indicates that some 8,000,000 of der Bingle's needlings went across the counter and into jukeboxes in 1945. That's considerably in excess of the number he must sell in order to earn the $300,000 he's said to be guaranteed annually by Decca

Keith Parkinson's Celluloid Crosby

There are several film festivals held every year in the USA. Cinecon started in 1964 and concerns itself with cinema history. On September 3rd last year the audience settled down at Grauman's Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood to watch Columbia's *It Happened in Hollywood.* When the title card announced the film as *Once a Hero,* film buffs thought that the long unseen *It Happened in Hollywood* would remain unseen for a little longer. Fortunately, the film that was screened was the 1937 opus they had been promised. The interest in It Happened in Hollywood stems from the plot, which tells how a silent screen cowboy, played by Richard Dix, finds himself unable to adapt to the introduction of talking pictures because his voice is unsuitable. The story predates *Singing in the Rain* by some fifteen years. That film related a similar plot line. The other aspect of *It Happened in Hollywood* which made fans seek it out was that it used lookalikes of well known screen stars of the time. That time was the birth of the talkie era in 1927. Mac West, Charlie Chaplin, Greta Garbo and W. C. Fields clones were on view. The actors also attempted to sound like the real thing. How does this feature in a column headed "Celluloid Crosby"? It is because Bing is depicted in *It Happened in Hollywood* some three years before he hit the movie capital.

By the time It *Happened in Hollywood* was doing the rounds, it was full speed ahead as far as Bing and film studios were concerned. Shooting on *Waikiki Wedding* wrapped up in February of 1937. Two months later, Bing worked during the early summer on *Double or Nothing.* Then, in November, he commenced *Doctor Rhythm.* All three were Paramount Pictures, although the last named film was a Major Films production (in which Bing had a financial interest) which was released through Paramount. It's *Doctor Rhythm* that is under the microscope in this issue of BING. Well, not the film as such, but the hype that surrounded films in the era when audiences were more gullible than in the twenty-first century and newspapers and magazines seemed to publish any press release that they thought might appeal to their readers. It was free publicity as far as the studios were concerned, and *Doctor Rhythm* got its fair share. A United Press release dated 15th October, 1937 read:

> On Sunday, Crosby and Bob Hope, who just arrived from Broadway to work in pictures, will play for the dubious title of Golf Champion of the Entertainment World. The loser will work for one day as an extra in the other's current picture.

Bing's partner in the match was Ed Sullivan, who was a syndicated columnist before finding fame as a television personality. No doubt he saw some mileage in the story and arranged for press photographers to attend and capture a doleful Bob Hope. Crosby shot 72 to Hope's 84. Of course there was no sign of Bob in *Doctor Rhythm,* but the story provided an appetite whetter for Crosby fans awaiting Bing's next movie.

The next piece of publicity began life as a serious news item. It also has a golfing background. In October, 1937, John Montague was in court in Elizabeth Town, New York. He was appealing against a seven year sentence imposed for burglary. Part of the appeal consisted of several prominent entertainment industry figures attesting to Montague's "honesty and truthfulness."

Bing's affidavit referred to a social friendship with Montague and went on to state that "the circle he moved in accepted him as an upright man". In fact, Montague was known to Bing as a result of his golfing skills. Possibly as a result of his character references, Montague was subsequently acquitted. Bing then told a United Press reporter, "I knew he'd win out. And I'll back him against anybody in this world when it comes to playing golf." The American legal system seems to work in ways almost as mysterious those Hollywood courtroom dramas. With Montague out on the streets again, the publicity men moved in. It was announced that he would make his motion picture debut in *Doctor Rhythm.* At the time the film was known by its original O'Henry short story title of *The Badge of Policeman O'Roon.* Bing said, "Monty's personal charm will make him successful in motion pictures. He ought to be able to play George Bancroft-type roles." As it happened, the Hays Office (the board which was responsible for protecting public morals when it came to movies), said that Montague was not acceptable for a part in Bing's new picture. But the incident provided some free publicity for *Doctor Rhythm,* which is all that was intended when Paramount sought to include Montague on screen alongside the man with whom he enjoyed a "social friendship".

The next opportunity for the Paramount publicity boys arose on October 22nd. Malcolm Macfarlane's 'Diary of a Lifetime" carries the entry: "Bing presides over an amateur show at 8.00 p.m. at the Armory, Spokane." At that event Bing made four

"discoveries". They were personable lads and lasses who would just love the opportunity to go to Hollywood and appear in films. They were offered minor roles in the new Crosby picture *Doctor Rhythm*. They may not have made it to the final release print but what the heck - the forthcoming film was mentioned in the newspapers.

A further round of publicity occurred at the time the film was ready to be released. The story headline in the "California Eagle" dated April 21st, 1938, read "MAN OUTROARS LION FOR PICTURE SCENE". You may recall that the opening scenes of *Doctor Rhythm* take place in Central Park Zoo. Bing and his two former high school cronies are let into the zoo at night by their pal Al, who is now a zoo keeper. The newspaper story related how the lions refused to roar on cue. They were shown hunks of meat in the hope that a sharpened appetite would produce a roar. When that failed to work, Rufe Davis, the actor playing the part of Al, revealed that he was an accomplished mimic. So he was given the mike and his roars are the ones heard on the soundtrack. Or so the story goes.

When I was a lad I used to collect front of house stills. These depicted scenes from the film currently showing. They were usually mounted in glass cases outside cinemas. They came in sets of eight. Students of film soon realised that they were specially posed shots as opposed to true depictions of what was to be seen on the big screen once the punter had parted with nine pence.

These FOH stills were provided to the cinemas in the UK by National Screen Services and always bore the legend that they were "The property of NSS" with the expectation that they would be returned with the reels of film when a picture completed its run. But my father happened to know the projectionist and several found their way to our house. The stills photographer was on hand not only to take posed action shots of key scenes but also to shoot anything which might provide publicity mileage for the film to which he was assigned. The stills photographer on Doctor Rhythm was Will N. "Bill" Crosby. He - or the Paramount publicity unit - sensed a photo opportunity when it was noted that the film's dance director was Jack Crosby. Credit was also given to Floyd Crosby as camera operator. Although the on screen acknowledgement for photography was to Charles Lang, it was indeed the trainee director of photography, Floyd Crosby, who was physically operating the camera. Arrangements were made for a shot to be taken by another

Bing meets the three "other" Crosbys

photographer so that "Bill" C. could be included in a picture. So we have a publicity still distributed in the States in early 1938 which shows the three "other" Crosbys turning towards Bing. Bing is in a policeman's uniform with a "Who? Me?" look on his face. It was probably a mildly intriguing stunt, even though the average cinemagoer would have no idea who the three non-Bing Crosbys were. Meanwhile, over in the UK, such Yankee hype would be deemed vulgar in the first half of the twentieth century. Publicity was mild compared with what happened across the Atlantic. Even so, *Doctor Rhythm* was seen as something special in the promotional stakes. On May 14th, 1938, The Granada Cinema, Greenford, celebrated its first birthday. It offered a piece of their monster birthday cake to every lady and child. There was a stage presentation including Troise and his Mandoliers and then a double bill of *Doctor Rhythm* and *Strange Boarders*. The latter is a long forgotten British comedy starring Tom Walls. 1 can't help thinking that some legislators in Brussels would not be happy denying red blooded males their slice of cake if the Granada held birthday celebrations in the twenty-first century.

Bing's films always had a long shelf life. Prints of *Doctor Rhythm* were still being shipped out by Paramount in 1942 - particularly where they had publicity value and pulling power. Since 1932, the Sunday Entertainment Act had allowed films to be shown on the Sabbath only with the consent of local authorities. In the provinces this was a long time a-coming. In Ashton-under-Lyne, Sunday showings started on April 20th, 1942. The local magistrates granted licences for film shows between 6.00 p.m. and 10.00 p.m. The town's live theatre saw an opportunity for increasing revenue. It had operated as a cinema from 1931 to 1939 before switching to stage shows. A decision was made to bring the screen back into service on Sundays. To ensure the new initiative got off to a good start, *Doctor Rhythm* was booked for that April 20th opening.

All of which tells you very little about the film *Doctor Rhythm* but illustrates how a film with Bing heading the cast list earned its keep in publicity terms.

Keith Parkinson

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

LOVE IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

Song. In *Here is My Heart* (1935), the Crosby character is a millionaire and whilst on his luxury yacht he duets the song with Cecilia Parker. Later in the film he uses it to serenade Kitty Carlisle. Leo Robin wrote the words to fit the melody for a one off collaboration with Lewis Gensler and Bing liked the song well enough to reprise it for his 1954 "Musical Autobiography".

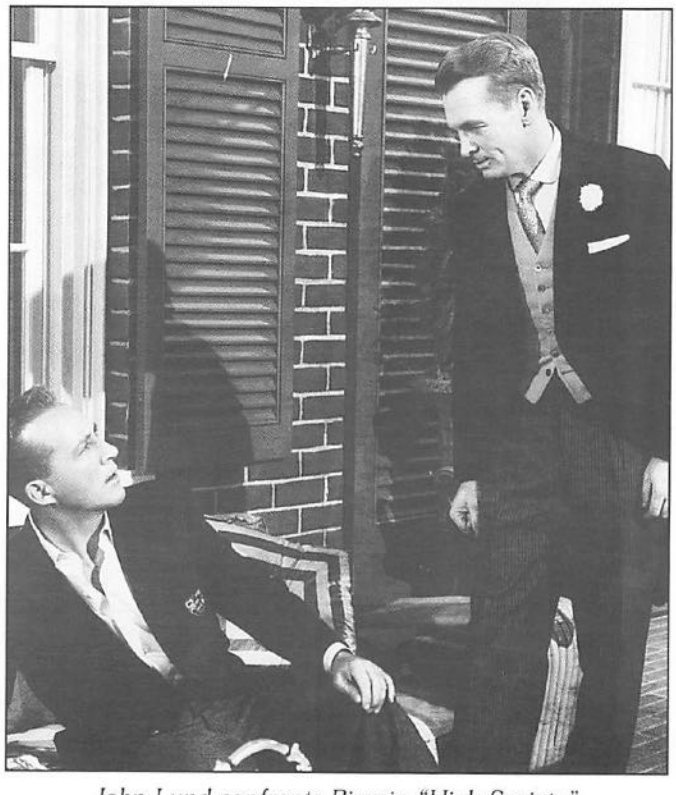
LOVE IS SO TERRIFIC

Song. Bing and the Andrews Sisters are heard singing this in the background in a scene from *Frances* (1982). That picture has another tenuous link with Bing's films. It was the screen biography of Frances Farmer, his leading lady in *Rhythm on the Range* (1936). The version used in *Frances* was taken from a Philco Radio Time broadcast of 1948.

LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR

Song. One of the songs written by Mack Gordon and Harry Revel for the 1934 picture *We're Not Dressing* that went on to become a Crosby classic. No vocalist seems to have tackled it over the last sixty-odd years but it remained in the Bing catalogue longer than some of his other songs simply because he re-recorded it in 1947 and then gave it a further brief whirl for his "Musical Autobiography" on its twentieth anniversary.

LUND, JOHN (1913-1992) Actor. Although one of the many Paramount contractees featured alongside Bing in *Variety Girl* (1947), Lund will always be remembered by readers of this magazine as the man who lost out to Bing in *High Society* (1956). As George Kittredge he found that Tracy Lord (Grace Kelly) really preferred to marry C. K. Dexter Haven (Crosby). Lund had the clean cut looks of a 1940s leading man, which is why Paramount signed him to a long term contract. Handsome he might have been, but he always came across as dull. His career as a leading man was more or less over when he made *High Society* and when he appeared in his last film - *If a Man Answers* (1962) - his time had passed.



John Lund confronts Bing in "High Society"

LUPINO, IDA (1918 - 1995) Actress - director - screenwriter. When Bing got the girl in *Anything Goes* (1936), she was Ida Lupino in the role of Hope Harper. At 18 she was already making her mark in the movies having been a veteran of half a dozen British films made during 1933. Paramount signed her up for seven years but did not realise her full potential. She was then under contract to Warner Bros. but found the studio using her in the parts they considered too weak for Bette Davis. By the 1950s she had turned to writing and directing some surprisingly tough films like *Outrage* (1950) and *The Hitchhiker* (1953). Her husbands were all in the film industry. Louis Hayward came first from 1938 to 1945. Then Columbia Pictures executive Collier Young followed (1948 to 1950). At the time of her death she was married to actor Howard Duff.

Ida Lupino in 'Anything Goes'

LYNN, DIANA (1926 - 1971) Actress. When I design my Bing Crosby Trivial Pursuit game I intend to pose the question, "Which actress was in four films which also featured Bing but who never appeared on screen with him?" It was Diana Lynn. An extra point will be awarded if her real name of Dolores Loehr is offered. The films were *Duffy's Tavern* (1945), *Out Of This World* (1945), *Hollywood Victory Caravan* (1945) and *Variety Girl* (1947). She was obviously under contract to Paramount at the time, having made her real acting debut in *The Major and the Minor* in 1942. That promising start was not consolidated. The studio using her in ordinary roles in ordinary pictures. By the 1950s she had sunk to appearing in the likes of *Bedtime for Bonzo* (1951). After *The Kentuckian* (1955) she called it quits at the age of 29. She had a change of mind and came out of retirement for *Company of Killers* in 1970. It wasn't good enough to set her on the comeback trail and she died the following year anyway.

MacARTHUR, CHARLES (1895 - 1956). Screenwriter, playwright and director. It was MacArthur the writer that linked him with Bing back in 1930 when he provided dialogue and sketches for *King of Jazz*. He was just getting into his writing stride then but hits soon followed. Best known are plays *The Front Page* and *Twentieth Century* and films *Gunga Din and Wuthering Heights*. The two films were both made in 1939.

McCAREY, LEO (1898 - 1969) Director, producer and screenwriter. McCarey more or less exercised his three aforementioned skills on his first outing with Bing. That was for arguably Bing's best ever screen effort: *Going My Way* (1944). McCarey produced, directed and provided the story basis and netted himself three Oscars in the categories of best film, best director and best original story. A sort of sequel was too good to miss and he fashioned *The Bells of St. Mary's* (1945) around the life of his aunt. McCarey formed his own production company - Rainbow Productions - in order to make the film and then appointed himself producer, director and screenwriter. It was another massive box office success. After those two significant contributions to Bing's screen career, six years elapsed before he directed the short *You Can Change the World* (1951). That promotional short for the Christophers' Association marks Bing's most dire film appearance. What a contrast. McCarey's Hollywood work links him with the best from directing four of Laurel and Hardy's finest short films through to his rnid - forties association with Bing. Along the way he proved to be a dab hand at getting the best from a number of comedians who never seem to go out of fashion. That run of critical and box - office success began in 1932 with Eddie Cantor in *The Kid From Spain*. The following year he directed The Marx Brothers in their best film, *Duck Soup*. Another year passed and he helmed two winners: *Six of a Kind* starring W. C. Fields and *Belle of the Nineties* with Mae West. Finally, in 1936, he directed Harold Lloyd in *The Milky Way*. By then he wanted to move slightly upmarket as far as screen comedy was concerned and he found himself adept with straight actors in comic roles in *Ruggles of Red Gap* (1935) and *Love Affair* (1939). It was after his Bing period that the public found that they could take him or leave him. After the mid - forties his only film remembered with any great affection was *An Affair to Remember* (1957), which was itself a remake of *Love Affair*. He retired after making *Satan Never Sleeps* in 1962.

Leo McCarey and Bing admire their Oscars for 'Going My Way'

McCAREY, RAY (1904 - 1948) Director. Brother of the more famous Leo, he was around at the start of Bing's Hollywood career, when the directed the RKO - Pathe one reel comedy *Two Plus Fours* (1930). Like his brother, he worked with Stan and Ollie, but he never graduated to films with decent budgets. When you read his filmography you are hard pressed to recall any of his output. *The Gay Intruders*, released the year after his death, is a typical entry.

McCOY, HARRY (1894 - 1937) Actor and screenwriter. Bing Crosby Trivial Pursuit game question 2: "Who deserved to be known as the real McCoy by working on the story and dialogue of four consecutive Bing films?" It was Harry, who spent most of his Hollywood career working for Mack Sennett. He received on screen credit for the four shorts made in 1931 which starred Bing. They were *I Surrender Dear, One More Chance, Dream House* and *Billboard Girl*. In 1911, McCoy began working as an actor and appeared in several films with Charlie Chaplin. By the 1920s he was working behind the scenes and he became regarded as a reliable slapstick gag man. His last credited work seems to have been the Crosby assignments for the Sennett studio.

MacDOUGALL, RANALD (1915 - 1973) Director, screenwriter and producer. He carried out the first two of those tasks on his sole Bing assignment. That was for *Man on Fire* in 1957. It was a strong role for Bing and is often overlooked when praising the dramatic Crosby, probably because by then he had demonstrated his serious acting skills in *Little Boy Lost* (1953) and *The Country Girl* (1954). MacDougall started on the bottom rung of the show business ladder as an usher at Radio City Music Hall. He climbed a rung to write radio plays. Then Warner Bros. employed him as a screenwriter. He then became president of the Screenwriters Guild. He was nearing the top of the ladder by 1954 when he took on his first directorial assignment. The film was *Queen Bee*. *Man on Fire* was his second job as director. By 1968 he had made it as producer. As last screen credit was as writer - producer on The *Cockeyed Cowboys of Calico County* (1970). Bing worked in television in the 1960s with MacDougall's wife, Nanette Fabray.

McHUGH, FRANK (1898 - 1981) Actor. McHugh made around 150 feature films in Hollywood. He appeared twice with Bing, both in Crosby's "Father" pictures. The first was the splendid *Going My Way* (1944), the second the less well liked *Say One For Me* (1959). He also worked with Bing in the TV sitcom series *The Bing Crosby Show* in 1964/65. In the years between supporting Father O'Malley and Father Conroy, he played some of his most memorable supporting roles in the likes of *State Fair* (1945), *Mighty Joe Young* (1949) and *There's No Business Like Showbusiness* (1954). When he was in light hearted roles he always made use of his contagious laugh. His final Hollywood part was in *Easy Come, Easy Go* (1967). Based on his screen persona, that title could double as McHugh's epitaph.

McHUGH, JIMMY (1894 - 1969) Songwriter. Bing sang just one McHugh song on screen. That was "We've Got Another Bond to Buy" in the 1945 bond - raising short *Hollywood Victory Caravan*. McHugh usually wrote in collaboration with Dorothy Fields and Harold Adamson and Bing recorded several of his songs for Decca. McHugh started writing for the movies at the dawn of the talkies. A couple of standards that lived on long after the films they were written for are *"Don't Blame Me"* from *Dinner at Eight* (1933) and "A Lovely Way to Spend an Evening" from *Higher and Higher* (1943). He quit the film business at the end of the 1950s.

Hope, Crosby Paved 'Road' With Laughs

The Paramount series offered witty spoofs at a time when they were needed.

This was the heading to the following article in the Los Angeles Times on June 7 by Kevin Thomas.

Hollywood did a terrific job of providing escapist fare for moviegoers during World War II, and some of the biggest laughs were provided by Paramount's "Road" series, which actually began in 1940 and continued intermittently until 1962. It teamed Bing Crosby, Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour in a series of zany adventures enlivened by lots of gags, a little romance and songs. The films were fast - paced and unpretentious, and the breezy Crosby - Hope banter remains evergreen.

The UCLA Film Archives screens tonight at 7:30 the third in the series, "Road to Morocco" (1942), directed by David Butler and written by Don Hartman and Frank Butler, no relation to the director but, surprisingly, an Englishman and an Oxford graduate. Essentially, "Road to Morocco" is a

hilarious spoof of "Arabian Nights" fantasies of the kind that Universal at the time was beginning to make in Technicolor with Maria Montez, who by all reports took her roles quite seriously.

With a wonderful disdain for exposition, "Road to Morocco" finds lifelong pals Crosby and Hope shipwrecked on a Mediterranean beach after their ocean liner is bombed. Making their way across a desert - - "This must be where they empty old hourglasses," observes Hope - - they end up in a studio back - lot fantasy kingdom of Karameesh. Without a second thought, Crosby sells off Hope to a local entrepreneur who in turn sells him to a beautiful princess (Lamour) as husband material - - never mind that she's engaged to a Valentino - like sheik (played by the late Anthony Quinn with tongue firmly in cheek); she has her reasons. Not surprisingly, Hope, swiftly adjusting to living like an Arab potentate, is none too welcoming to Crosby, even if Crosby was the inadvertent instrument of his seemingly fabulous good fortune. But Lamour's pert handmaiden Dona Drake has designs on Hope, while Crosby's serenading of Lamour with "Moonlight Becomes You" has its impact on the princess. Many shenanigans ensue, to be sure.

Sets are suitably sumptuous in the grand old Hollywood make - believe manner, and Edith Head provided Lamour with a wardrobe that interpreted harem styles with sophistication and glamour. "Road to Morocco" is light and airy family entertainment, yet at a time when the Production Code was at its height of power, it is surprising what Crosby and especially Hope, of course, manage to suggest. An Archive Treasures presentation, "Road to Morocco" will be preceded by vintage short subjects, just as it would have been at theaters six decades ago.

Kevin Thomas

(Editor: It's good to read about these special showings of Bing films. It will help a new generation to discover him at his peak.)

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

Tom Bertino, San Rafael, California, USA.

I have BING 127 in my hands and a lovely thing it is, too, what with all the coverage of Giddins' book. I am currently reading the book, but when I dropped off last night Bing had just made it to high school, so it's probably a bit early for me to comment on it. However, I will admit to being rather proud of the coverage in the San Francisco Chronicle when it appeared.

My real reason for writing is that I wanted to share a remarkable experience I had recently. First, a bit of scene - setting for those outside the U.S. About an hour's drive south of San Francisco lies Stanford University, one of the more prominent halls of learning in the country. As is the custom in university towns, a number of surrounding establishments provide access to the arts and cultivated living in general. One of these is the Stanford Theatre, a fully - restored "movie palace" of the '20s which programs an all - "classics" playlist. This venture has been a success, and most offerings get a respectable turnout.

Well, it happens that on my birthday (March 10th, a natal anniversary I proudly share with Bix!), the Stanford was scheduled to show an original nitrate print of WE'RE NOT DRESSING. Could I have wished for a better birthday present? Nothing would do but my wife and I piling into the car and making the hour and - a - half trek down the bay. This was naturally a very exciting prospect, because as I don't need to tell you Crosby pictures, aside from maybe WHITE CHRISTMAS or HIGH SOCIETY, rarely if ever get theatrical revivals.

When we got there, however, our jaws hung open like old drawers. We were expecting the usual decent - sized audience, but instead we found a line stretching from the box office down the block to the corner. Amazed, we turned the corner to join the line, only to see that it wound once more around the block to the back corner! Picking up our pace, we headed back there, and were finally able to join the line around the back of the block, as dozens filled in behind us. At this point I was seriously worried about getting seats at all, but at last we moved forward, got our tickets, and ended up having to sit in the top of the balcony to see the picture.

Now, this doesn't sound like an expected reaction to a "forgotten" entertainer, does it? But there's another aspect to all this I found particularly gratifying. Unlike most audiences at the Stanford, this one was a complete mix...the expected older folks and afficionados, but also lots of college kids, middle agers, families with young children. In short, the exact kind of scope of audience the film was designed for in the first place. Bing's songs drew large applause, the tykes squealed at the roller - skating bear, and I felt for all the world that I'd been transported back to 1934, surrounded by a packed

house enjoying the picture to the utmost.

Bing fan that I am, I admit I was stunned that so many people were so eager to embrace this film ... that, in fact, they seemed absolutely hungry for it. It was a wonderful evening and hopefully an indicator that the Groaner's time, at last, has come around again.

(Editor: What am amazing event! Is Bing being re - discovered? Let's hope Tom is right. Since Tom notified us of this event we have learned, via Charlie Baillie, that the Stanford Theatre has been presenting a series of 106 musicals originally released in the years 1929 to 1950. As well as "We're Not Dressing" other Bing films namely "The Big Broadcast", "Too Much Harmony", "Going Hollywood", "The Big Broadcast of 1936", "Star Spangled Rhythm" and the first six "Road" films have been shown. Wonderful! Let's all move to Stanford!)

Stan White, 57 Stanley St., Rothwell, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN14 6EA, UK

I wonder how many readers will have noticed quite a remarkable coincidence on the letters page 45 of the Spring edition. A letter from Ted Laker followed by one from me. Had this been in 1956 and onwards, it would have been nothing unusual as we were both publicity officers for the British Crosby Society, with Frank Murphy in command. I last met Ted in 1957, at Bill Taylor's home in Holborn, London. But this is 2001 - 44 years later.

What a pity "A Pocketful of Dreams" is not in the UK bookshops for the general public to see and purchase, it would do so much good for Bing in the UK.

Keith Parkinson, Meadowcroft, Houghtons Lane. Eccleston, St. Helens WA10 5LD, UK

BING 127 was a nice, fat magazine. Not a sentence was superfluous and the coverage of Gary Giddins' book was fully justified. I expected Little, Brown and Co. to issue it in the UK more or less simultaneously but they obviously don't see it as having international appeal. The Stateside reviewers regard it as a scholarly work and this seems to detract from its sales potential, even though it made the New York Times best sellers list.

Robert Achorn was impressive in his research into *Two Plus Fours*. Our US members might like to know that Lacher and Zvarich who discovered the 16mm Pathe shorts, arranged a video release. The supplier is Gary Lacher, 1821 SE Hazel, Portland, Oregon 97214 and the cost is $14.99

(Editor: Thanks Keith for the info. Returning to Gary Giddins' book, I too am amazed that Little Brown have not published it in the UK, a "hotbed" of Crosbyana. Ron Field has recently sent me a press cutting from the Weekend Australian newspaper which indicates that the book has now been published in Australia. Perhaps Little Brown will issue the paperback version here in due course. Meanwhile, I have been conscientiously ordering the book from Amazon.co.uk over the Internet for our UK members using my own credit card and I must be in line for a prize from Amazon as their best customer!)

Greg Van Beek, 3006 Emerald, West Bend, Wisconsin 53095, USA

Whilst reading your review of the DVD of "A Bing Crosby Christmas - Just Like the One's We Used to Know" on page 41, I noticed the original air date you listed (December 6, 1978) is incorrect. It actually aired December 6, 1979. The 1978 Christmas special was titled "Bing Crosby: The Christmas Years" and aired on CBS December 2, 1978. It featured Kathryn and the children "at home" reminiscing about Christmases past, by watching videotapes of their Christmas Specials. A different format from the 1979 show, which aired on NBC.

(Editor: Thanks, Greg, for pointing out this typo. My brain knew the facts but my fingers couldn't translate them on to paper!

When Bing was in the UK in 1975 he made a commercial for Tennent's lager at a pub in Scotland. Peter Monaghan has been tracking the location down and he reports as follows.)

Peter Monaghan, Crosbyanna, 25 Weir Avenue, Barrhead, Glasgow G78 2BY, UK

At long last I have managed to locate the Black Bull Inn at a delightful village called Straiton in Ayrshire where Bing did the commercial for Tennent's lager. It is roughly a 90 minutes drive from where I live. We waited until the weather was better before my wife and I together with our daughter and son - in - law went there on a holiday Monday last

month. It was well worth the wait for the weather was absolutely perfect and the scenery also. Unfortunately the young barman had no recollection of Bing having been there. It was long before his time but Bing's photo was still on the wall after all this time.

I personally met Bing on three occasions. At Gleneagles, and twice at Turnberry. Both renowned Scottish golf courses. I found him to be just as he is always described, very warm and friendly.

Eric Jackson, 202 Barnsley Rd., Wath - upon - Dearne, Nr. Rotherham, S. Yorks S63 6DQ, UK

Thanking you for the ICC magazine. It's certainly come a long way over the last few years. . . .Liked the article on Eddie Lang as I am a jazz buff also. That man Chick Bullock is haunting me. He did record "Darkness on the Delta" and a great many jazz musicians I know swear that it's Bing. Obviously not, although Bing did sing it twice on the "Music That Satisfies" series in 1933.

The evening before I received the magazine, I was playing a jazz CD. Guess who? Chick Bullock and his Orchestra. So I've taped this single item for you. He's nothing like Bing was in the early 30s. The song is "Any Time, Any Day, Anywhere" with Tommy Dorsey (tmb), Jimmy Dorsey (Clt alto sax), Bunny Berigan or Manny Klein (tpt), Larry Binyon (t. sax), Joe Venuti (vln) to name a few in the orchestra. As you can see, the personnel is similar to that supporting Bing around that time.

(Editor: It was good of Eric to send me a cassette and from listening to it, I can confirm that Chick Bullock had a pleasant easy voice but he was certainly not a Bing impersonator. Others who investigated the elusive Mr. Bullock were Jim Newell and Bob Achorn...)

Jim Newell, 17 Edwina Close, Bitterne, Southampton, Hampshire, SO19 7BJ, UK

In answer to the question from Peter Burgis in BING 127, Chick Bullock was born on September 16, 1908 in Mutte, Massachusetts and he died on September 15, 1981 in California. His parents were English and they wanted him to become a doctor, but he was attracted to vaudeville and became a singer. He began as a time - filler, singing to a series of pictures changing on screen behind him. This led him into small parts in silent movies.

Chick also provided vocals for records by Duke Ellington, Luis Russell, Cab Calloway and others, and turned down an offer from Paul Whiteman to become one of his vocalists. A disfiguring eye ailment forced him to concentrate on records and radio broadcasts rather than live broadcasts.

During the 1930s he worked with his 'Levee Loungers' which was strictly a house band of ARC and recorded prolifically. He was able to attract a stream of fine musicians including Bunny Berigan, Bill Coleman, Jack Teagarden, Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey and Joe Venuti. The musicians strike of the 1940s ended Bullock's recording activities. Unwilling to work with only vocal groups, he moved to California and took up a new career in the Real Estate business.

Bob Achorn, 41 Johnson Rd., Sutton, MA 01590 - 2305, USA

Just another follow - up on your Chick Bullock query. I finally came across a Bullock recording (You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby.) It comes first on the enclosed tape. I followed it with Bing's recording of the same number.

Bullock's record (with his Levee Loungers band) was recorded 20 October 1938 in New York. That's just six days after Bing recorded the song in Chicago with Bob Crosby's band. It's one more in scores of cases where Bullock appeared to cover Bing's recordings. Bullock's version was released by ARC under its Vocalion label (Vocalion 4460) and on Conqueror 9149 (Conqueror, if memory serves, being a house label used by Sears, Roebuck on records it sold in its stores and through its catalogues.)

Bullock's opening phrase is definitely Crosbyish. But the comparison quickly weakens from there on. Crosby's version is warmer, sharper, swings more, and is far more melodic. In my view, on this one number at least Bing cuts Chick to shreds. How they compare on the dozens of other songs they both recorded, I don't know.

I can see (or rather hear) why some thought Bullock resembled Crosby. That was no doubt ARC's point. But, judging by this, Chick had a long way to go to catch up with Bing (not that he ever did.)

Bing's Mother Speaks!

Gary Hamann's new book 'Bing Crosby - Covering All Bases' contains many interesting items and one that caught my eye was an interview with Bing's mother undertaken by Lucie Neville and published in the San Francisco Chronicle of February 6, 1938. With Gary's permission we are reproducing the interview below with grateful thanks to the San Francisco Chronicle.

Hollywood says Bing Crosby is a lazy guy who gets all the breaks. If you were to accuse Bing himself, he'd only grin and amiably agree. But there aren't any four - leaf clovers in the Crosby shamrock patch, according to his mother. She says he hasn't a lazy bone in his body and what people call luck is hard work.

She would correct a number of other popular

misconceptions about her son: that he doesn't know anything about music, that he never had any stage training, that he prefers noisy clothes, that he's happy - go - lucky, how he got his nickname. It's Bing's business, of course, if he wants to let people keep on thinking such things, she lets you understand. Bing's and Larry's business, rather, for the elder Larry is his movie star brother's agent and business manager and the official spokesman for Bing Crosby, Inc., Ltd.

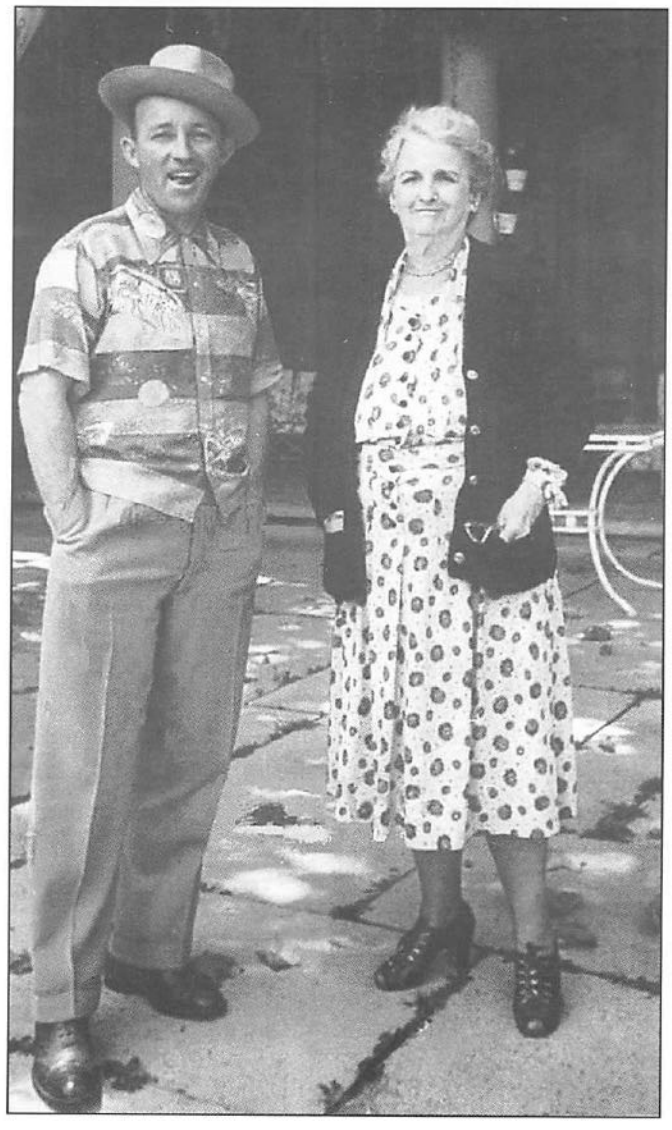
"You'll have the story about his nickname right for the first time in history," Mrs. Crosby said with some amusement. "I've heard the one about his being called "Bing" because the Bingville comics were in our paper and he always read them. And I know the one that most people believe - that we called him that because he was always playing cowboy and Indian and yelling 'Bing, bing!' But neither of them is true.

"He was just 3 when we moved to Spokane, and a lively youngster. The children he played with nicknamed him 'Bingo' - just because he was so full of pep. And pretty soon they shortened it to 'Bing.' He liked it himself - I don't think he likes his real name very well, which is Harry Lillis after his father. The 'Bing' stuck through school and college. I've never called him anything except Harry, though lately I've got into calling him 'Bing' sometimes, as everybody else does. But he always signs his letter to me 'Harry.'"

Bing looks a great deal like his mother - the steady, deep - set blue eyes, the prominent nose and clear skin. In spite of years that show in her light gray hair, she carries herself with military straightness and vigor. When she posed for photographs (a special favor as she never has appeared in her son's public life) she said candidly, "I'd rather they'd look good than look like me."
"Harry doesn't like to pose for pictures and the studio has an awful time cornering him when they need new ones," she said. "They say he's the only one in the business who just comes in the door and says, 'All right - shoot!'"

He's just as unconcerned about his clothes, too, his mother said. Hollywood gives him the palm for being its dizziest dresser, a typical Crosby ensemble being a canary yellow sweater, a checked cap, a Highland plaid jacket and brown slacks. It tells a story about him, that he said to his valet (he hasn't one): "Bring me my brown suit - the one with the gray vest and the blue pants."

Perhaps Hollywood underestimates Bing's shrewdness in not being a snappy dresser; it may be a sort of protective coloration in a community where a correct morning coat makes citizens stop and stare to see what you're advertising. "The clothes help a lot in keeping him from being recognized," his mother pointed out. "He's had pretty good luck so far - until somebody yells 'Hello, Bing!' and then they're after him.



Bing with his mother.

"The reason he doesn't dress for broadcasts is because he's too busy. He goes straight through the afternoon with rehearsal, then the broadcast and eats dinner afterward. People don't realize that, when they say he's sloppy and lazy. Harry - that is, Bing - is up at seven every morning, and except for going to the fights, he'd like to be in bed at nine if he could. When he walks, he covers more ground than two people, and he's dashing around all day."

What spare time he has is spent on the ranch, Mrs. Crosby said. He has a large place near Del Mar and his stock breeding is becoming an important part of his business. He will have 12 horses entered at Santa Anita this year, one of them winner of a Bay Meadows stake, which may make Hollywood take Bing's racers more seriously. Any other time is spent in sports or on the golf course of Lakeside Country Club near his home. "He's club champion, you know," his mother said proudly. "And he plays tennis very well, though he only took that up two years ago. He's a fine swimmer, too - I can't

remember when he didn't swim.

"When we (the senior Crosbys) moved here from Spokane, I brought some of his swimming medals I'd found which he had won when he was twelve or fourteen. He was tickled to death because he could show them to Dick Arlen. You'd think those two were the biggest liars on earth when they get to bragging about what they did when they were boys. They'd have to be at least 150 years old to have done all they claim."

Six of the Crosby's seven children were born on the west coast. Lawrence (called Larry), with the second son, Everett, and H.L. Crosby Sr., are the officers, directors and stockholders of the firm of Bing Crosby, Inc., Ltd. The third son, Ted (christened Edward John), still lives in Spokane; he paired Bing's twin boys with twin girls. Bing came next, then Catherine, Mary Rose and Bob, whose orchestra is adding to the Crosby fame.

The family moved from Tacoma to Spokane when Bing was 3 and they needed the four bedrooms and sleeping porch that were in the big house just off the Gonzaga University campus. Mrs. Crosby is still unreconciled to the loss of her huge cellar, despite her pretty new house in Toluca Lake district here.

"It was one of the most important rooms, and the bigger your basement, the better your house was," she said. "We had to have room. And I never knew how many extra I'd have for meals or how many would come downstairs in the morning.

"I'm old - fashioned in some things," she said, but with no apology in her tone, "and one of them has always been wanting to know where my children are at night. Ours were always at home, except when they were given special permission to spend the night at a friend's where I knew the mother was as careful as I was. We kept sort of open house and the children were free to bring their friends any time they pleased."

When people say that Bing doesn't know anything about music and hint that he can't even read it, his mother remembers the Sunday nights the family gathered around the piano.

"We had all the musical instruments and the whole family sang," she said. "Harry studied with a very good teacher for two years and sang in several concerts. That was when he was still in knee - pants and even then he had an outstanding voice. But we decided it was time to stop right then, if he was going to have a good voice later on. He played the drums then and when he organized his own band in college he began singing again - you remember, the drummer nearly always was the vocalist, too, in those days? Then the biggest theater in town hired him to sing in the evenings. They had a trio and he made the fourth for a quartet. They put on sketches and little skits and Harry always had the comedy parts. He could always get a laugh - he can now when he wants to be in a crowd, but he never clowns at home.

"I guess you know the rest about his singing," she concluded. It's been told so many times." It is a familiar story to Bing's fans - how he and Al Rinker, a college chum who played the piano, toured in vaudeville and night clubs, finally attracting the attention of Paul Whiteman who signed them for his band. Harry Barris, another vocalist, shortly after made the trio that comprised Whiteman's Rhythm Boys for three years. After the picture, *King of Jazz,* Crosby began to make a name for himself; best - selling records and a dozen talkies paved the way to radio.

He was a little stubborn lately about Paramount's changing the name of his current picture from *The Badge of Policeman O'Roon* to *Dr. Rhythm.* Crosby thought it might be a crack at his recently awarded degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Music, which Gonzaga university conferred on him last October.

"He was really proud of that," his mother said. "He told me he had a hard time to keep from crying a couple of times when they were giving him the degree. And he was awfully pleased with the football blanket. That was the first time they'd ever given one to anybody who wasn't on the team."

It is not generally known in Hollywood, though the Spokane papers carried the story, that Bing footed the bill for his home - town celebration. He spent about $5,000 to bring all his entertainers with him, to show the home - folks a big time, and went to great trouble arranging for the radio program to be broadcast from Gonzaga.

The $20,000 that he collected in admissions to the broadcast were given immediately to the university. Neither Bing nor his mother had a single word to say about any of this; it is one of the many unpublicized generosities that make him so universally liked. Though he was justifiably proud of the degree, he told Spokane interviewers, "I was lucky, that's all."

"He's that way about everything," his mother said. "If you say, 'They call you Bing because you used to play Indian, don't they?', he'll say, 'Yeah, sure - that was it.' He won't deny that he can't read music or hasn't had any training for what he's doing now. Why, he's had what he wanted to do in the back of his head all the time!

"He was in all the public speaking contestsóhe memorizes very quickly - and he didn't win the highest place in college debating with just luck.

"Harry always worked," she said. "All our boys have. We were using our money to send them through school, but spending money, as Harry said not long ago, they had to rustle for themselves. He was the kind of boy who always seemed to

understand, and I never remember his asking me for money. He earned it instead - mowing lawns, selling papers and magazines, anything he could find to do. Even now, when he finds me worrying about something, he says, 'Quit it, Mom - I do enough worrying for the both of us."

(Editor: Interesting to get a little more insight into the mind of Bing's mother and as we know she influenced her son considerably. By the way, don't delay if you want a copy of Gary Hamann's book. Full details in Trading Post)

BOOKS 'N' BING

Merry Christmas! Celebrating America's Greatest Holiday

Danny Flies, one of our Belgian members, kindly sent me a copy of this new book by Karal Ann Marling which looks at all aspects of Christmas comprehensively. The Crosby interest is in a chapter headed "Dreaming of a White Christmas - how Bing Crosby and the Grinch Almost Stole Christmas." The chapter describes the film *Holiday Inn* is some detail and goes on to consider the message of that film and of the later film *White Christmas* with particular emphasis on how our thoughts about Christmas had changed in the interval between the making of the films. The writer is clearly enthusiastic about Bing and the song 'White Christmas' and here's a nice extract.

> With its wrenching evocations of home and loved ones and snow and yesterday, "White Christmas" explained what Americans were fighting for in Europe and the Pacific - and later, Korea - as they sent in their requests to hear Crosby's record on Armed Forces Radio. "White Christmas" was the "unofficial national popular song" of its era, according to a recent study of Christmas music. More than just a Christmas song, it spoke in simple, direct language of the state of quasi - religious grace that the American Christmas had always aimed to attain: an ideal combination of nature and culture, trees and cards, memory and anticipation, innocence, and the dream of home. In the Crosby version, the music floats, swoops, and soars over the imagery without effort or impediment; a perfect embodiment of the dream state, it transports the singer into the heart of a perfect Christmas. The song is short. It says nothing about the crush of crowds in the stores, about old anxieties rekindled as families come together, the gifts that Santa didn't bring, the airports clogged with holiday delays - the stuff of Christmas phobias and stress. It conjures up more than it describes, in the gentle snow - sped glide of the melody.

The book is published by Harvard University Press, price $27.

LIONEL'S LINES

"THE CROONER OLYMPICS"

The odds against Andy Warhol's prediction that 'everyone will be famous for fifteen minutes' have shortened dramatically but I wonder - does his unproven theory take account of reflected glory?

For instance, fairly recently, I met a chap who told me, that the man who cleaned his windows, also cleans the windows of a well - known, soap - opera star. This was easily surpassed by the lady who was actually given the hotel room that George Clooney might have slept in - had he turned up. Back in the late Fifties, both of these would have been put in the shade by Connie, a sometime girlfriend and usherette at the local Odeon, who loftily advised me that her uncle, drove a trolley - bus which route took him within two roads of where Cliff Richard used to live.

But we live in modern times and there is no longer any need to be a splattered bug on the great windscreen of life. With the proliferation of CCTV, I am told that, in the normal course of our daily round, many of us will appear on camera, an incredible, three hundred times a week. Indeed, those who are striving for a photo opportunity have only to visit the local branch of Lloyds TSB with a paper bag over their head, to achieve instant immortality.

Be cautioned, however, that this is not a licence for taking on speed cameras with a cellular phone in one hand and the ubiquitous bottle of spa water in the other. Instead, be advised, that with brute perseverance and a reckless disregard for the size of your telephone bill, there is now unlimited scope for 'wannabe's on national television. Answer five silly questions (or even fall at the first hurdle) on 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire' and next morning, your name will be on the lips of the world. You might also welcome the exciting rise of the 'endurance' game shows that spew from our teeming channels. A 'team' game? Forget it! To achieve the distinction for which you crave, you have only to play the 'absolute rotter' among a whining group of malcontents

marooned on a island in the South China Sea or, if you don't travel well, in a Nissen hut in Uxbridge.

Other programmes welcoming 'just ordinary folks' are those that are loosely catalogued as, 'topical studio debate'. Just latch on to one of the typical themes, like 'My Boy Friend Is Making Out With Grandma'. Prepare your hard - hitting script, grapple unconvincingly with the black - clad 'bouncers', scatter a few boisterous 'extras' throughout the audience and you're home and dry.

On the other hand, it is probably easier to infiltrate one of the 'real life drama' series. This will involve a measure of patience and in addition to wearing a funny hat and carrying a banner, may involve loitering in the vicinity of Hospitals, Animal Clinics, Airports or, possibly, the central reservation on a Motorway.

However, these are all avenues that rely, heavily, on your ability to set up that recalcitrant VCR, by means of which a permanent record of your stairway to the stars will forever be preserved. Far better, to get your name in print. This means forgetting about going ex - directory or being referred to in 'Letters to the Editor' as, 'name and address supplied'. Get 'up front', where the public can recognise you, preferably in the daily papers or in the index of some work of reference that may be referred to, a hundred years hence.

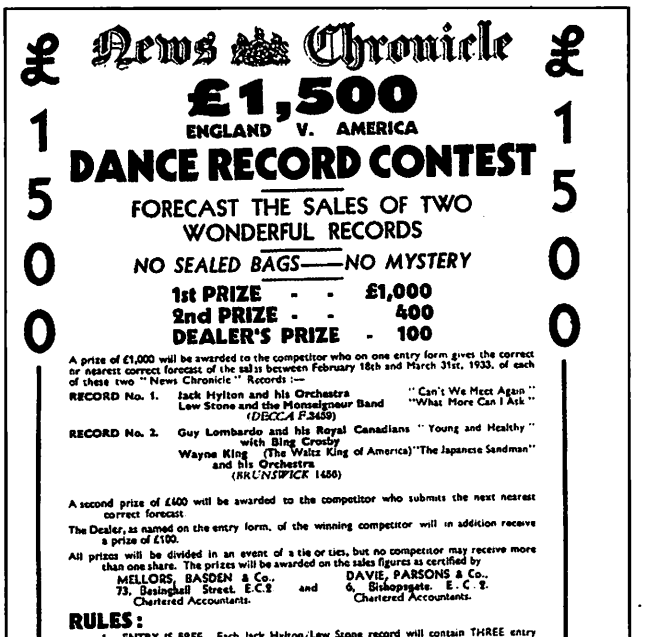
Had your name been 'Bing Crosby' there would be no problems. As well as appearing in volumes devoted to movies and music, he has references in such momentous publications as the 'Encyclopaedia Britannica', 'The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations' and 'Stanley Gibbons' Stamp Catalogue'. In the (auto) biographies of innumerable personalities from Noel Coward to Groucho Marx and from Jeffrey Archer to Lester Piggott. In magazines, from 'Look' and 'Life' to 'Woman's Realm' and 'The People's Friend'. In newspapers, from 'The New York Times' to 'The East African Standard'. In such diverse texts as, 'The Girls Behind The Guns (With The ATS in World War II)' to the transcripts of the 'investigations' for the House Committee on Un - American Activities. (Leo McCarey, Director of 'Going My Way', said that he wasn't popular in Russia because of one character ever present in his films. 'Bing Crosby?' asked the Committee counsel. 'No,' McCarey replied, 'God').

Let us return to a time when the public was still waiting to see Crosby in a Paramount contract picture in which he did not play himself. Back to that period when Hitler was 'tidying up' the Third Reich and New Yorkers eagerly awaited 'Beero Hour' when their favourite tipple would not have to be supplied by characters looking like Humphrey Bogart or Edward G. Robinson. When, Australians were a little upset about the English 'bodyline' bowlers and the inevitable carthorse was galloping through a branch of Woolworth's. The year is 1933 and for more than a month, Bing Crosby's name appeared, on an almost daily basis, in the columns of a British newspaper.

'News Chronicle' Thursday 16th February 1933 (Front page) 'Dance Music - England versus U.S. The first step was taken yesterday in a great international dance band contest which is being organised by the 'News Chronicle'.

Four world famous dance bands, two English and two American, are competing. Each band has played a dance tune and the four tunes have been recorded on two gramophone records.

£1500 in prizes - The public is to be invited to judge English versus American dance music as typified by these records and the 'News Chronicle' is offering £1500 in prizes in a new and fascinating competition. England is being represented by Jack Hylton and his Band and Lew Stone and his Monseigneur Band with Al Bowlly. America by Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians with Bing Crosby and Wayne King and his Orchestra.



£ News Chronicle £

£1,500

ENGLAND V. AMERICA

DANCE RECORD CONTEST

FORECAST THE SALES OF TWO WONDERFUL RECORDS

NO SEALED BAGS—NO MYSTERY

1st PRIZE - - £1,000
2nd PRIZE - - 400
DEALER'S PRIZE - 100

A prize of £1,000 will be awarded to the competitor who on one entry form gives the correct or nearest correct forecast of the sales between February 18th and March 31st, 1933, of each of these two "News Chronicle" Records :—

RECORD No. 1. Jack Hylton and his Orchestra "Can't We Meet Again"
Lew Stone and the Monseigneur Band "What More Can I Ask"
(DECCA F.3459)

RECORD No. 2. Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians "Young and Healthy" with Bing Crosby
Wayne King (The Waltz King of America) "The Japanese Sandman"
and his Orchestra
(BRUNSWICK 1456)

A second prize of £400 will be awarded to the competitor who submits the next nearest correct forecast.

The Dealer, as named on the entry form, of the winning competitor will in addition receive a prize of £100.

All prizes will be divided in an event of a tie or ties, but no competitor may receive more than one share. The prizes will be awarded on the sales figures as certified by

MELLORS, BASDEN & Co., 73, Basinghall Street, E.C.2 Chartered Accountants. and DAVIE, PARSONS & Co., 6, Bishopsgate, E.C.2. Chartered Accountants.

RULES :

1. ENTRY IS FREE. Each Jack Hylton/Lew Stone record will contain THREE entry forms and each Guy Lombardo/Wayne King will contain FOUR entry forms. One will appear each day in the "News Chronicle" and "Star."
2. Competitors may send in as many forecasts as they please providing the forms supplied with records and in "News Chronicle" and "Star" ONLY are used.
3. Each envelope MUST contain at least one "News Chronicle" entry form and one "Record" entry form.
4. Enclose all entry forms in one envelope ON THE BACK OF WHICH the competitor's name and address must be written clearly in block type, and post to "Dance Record Contest," "News Chronicle," 13, Pocock Street, London, S.E.1 (Comp.), to arrive not later than Monday, March 27th.
5. Competitors must keep a copy of their entries and claim in accordance with the full instructions which will be published in the "News Chronicle" following the close of the Competition.
6. This competition appears in the "News Chronicle" and "The Star," and readers of both papers are eligible to compete for the prizes of £1,500.
7. No correspondence can be entered into or interviews granted. No responsibility can be accepted for any entries or claims lost, mislaid or delayed, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery or receipt. The Editor's decision on all matters is final and legally binding, and acceptance of this is a condition of entry.
8. Failure to comply with any of the above rules involves disqualification, and the Editor of the "News Chronicle" reserves the right to disqualify any competitor for reasons which he considers good and sufficient.
9. Employees of the "News Chronicle," the "Star" and the Decca and Brunswick Record Companies are not eligible to compete.

[P.T.O.

'England versus U.S.'! - Already the stage is set for gladiatorial combat - or an awkward International incident! At this juncture it might be pertinent to point out that two entry forms were required. One to be published, daily, in the newspaper and the other, to be received, on purchase the record(s).

Saturday 18th February 1933 'Two striking

features of the 'News Chronicle' £1500 Dance Record Competition make it the most attractive test of skill of its kind. One, the greatest value in dance music ever offered to the British public. Two, big cash prizes, for a simple estimate of sales of two wonderful records. To a very great extent, dance music in this country has followed the popular taste of America but in crossing the Atlantic the hot Harlem interpretations have been modified and melody introduced. Rhythm is the essence of American dance music and the bands in the States reign supreme in this special characteristic. Rhythm all the time - trumpet trills and saxophone solos are blended into notation that compels a rhythmic response from the audience. Melody versus Rhythm - England versus America. To settle this great issue, the 'News Chronicle' has arranged for two super records to define the most popular dance music in the two countries. Here they are - Record No. 1: Jack Hylton and his Orchestra - 'Can't We Meet Again'/Lew Stone and the Monseigneur Band with Al Bowlly - 'What More Can I Ask?' *(Decca F3549 Two shillings)*

Record No. 2: Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians with Bing Crosby - 'Young And Healthy'/Wayne King and his Orchestra - 'The Japanese Sandman' *(Brunswick 1456 Two shillings and sixpence)*

Two of the most famous dance bands in England on one record and the best - known bands of America on the other. Both on sale at the usual prices. Which will be the more popular? Will the sales of the English or the American be the greater? Prizes of £1500. First: £1000 - Second: £400 - Dealers: £100 - For the most accurate estimates of the sales of each record during the first six weeks of issue from today until 31st March inclusive'.

Now, it is 'Melody versus rhythm'. Have the 'rules of engagement' been over - simplified? Surely a decent tune would combine both elements. The enormity of the £1000 first prize must be judged by comparison with advertisements in the newspaper. This sum would have purchased and furnished, a couple of three - bedroom houses in one of the capital's more select suburbs. ('New Houses £345 - £1 secures (no hidden extras) - 8/5d (42p) per week') You will also note that Bing has already incurred a handicap. His recording is the more expensive by 6d. Again, a story from the same paper may serve to put this into perspective. A man stood accused of failing to provide his estranged wife with proper maintenance. The court ruled against him and ordered him to pay her 2d per week!

Tuesday 21st February 1933 'Four of the world's most famous dance bands, two English and two American have each selected one of the tunes and recorded it on gramophone records. The public is invited to judge between the dance bands of the two nations. It is a game of skill, a test of musical criticism and of your capacity for judging the public taste. Listen to Jack Hylton and his boys playing, 'Can't We Meet Again'. Now try the American record and contrast Jack's typically English orchestration with Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians playing, 'Young And Healthy' with Bing Crosby singing the refrain. The comparison between this record and the English is striking. The tempo is quicker, the rhythm more pronounced and is typically American. The record is of special interest and has been chosen by the 'News Chronicle' because it offers the double attraction of one of America's leading dance bands with Bing Crosby, the acknowledged king of crooners. In the words of the refrain, Bing Crosby is full of 'Vitamin A', as he goes through the whole range of the crooner's art. He sings, whistles and vo - do - deo - dos'.

Monday 27th February 1933 'In this article Al Bowlly explains what crooning is and tells how jazz was developed in South (sic) Africa long before it reached America'.

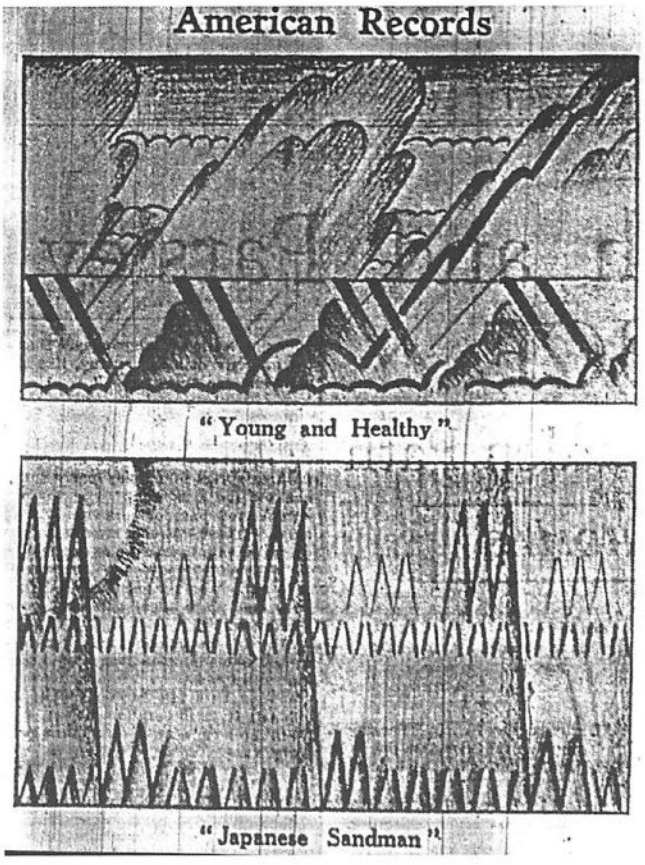
'There are two types of singers today which for want of a better word are both called crooners. There is a soft - voiced singer who sings so close to the microphone that he is said to be 'kissing the mike'. He 'puts his stuff over' with a plaintive intimacy but his range of expression is limited. He is the crooner proper. Then there is the singer crooner whose range varies from a whisper to a volume that will fill the largest hall. The difference between him and the ordinary straight singer is that he sings naturally, instead of artificially - like a concert artist. He fakes. He is a trick singer. If he cannot sing a note he dodges it or substitutes another or slurs to an easier range but in all giving a pleasant result. His object is to tell the story of the song with feeling and expression. Bing Crosby, the American who has been described as the King of Crooners is a singer - crooner of this type. Listen to Bing Crosby singing

'Young And Healthy' on the American record in the News Chronicle dance tune competition and compare his range, volume and expression with those of the crooner who can only whisper'.

You may have difficulty in deciding whether Bowlly was commending or condemning his rival but during the six weeks contest, many other authorities were called upon to voice their opinions. Featured personalities included Josephine Baker, Ambrose, Henry Hall and Victor Silvester together with the somewhat bizarre - Major Cecil H. Taylor, President of the Imperial Society of Teachers Of Dancing and the following:

'News Chronicle' Saturday 4th March 1933 'Music In Design' - 'Rhythmism - A new art which interprets music in pictorial form. Mr. Edward Swann, a well - known artist who has demonstrated it before appreciative audiences, has created it. Mr. Swann has taken the four dance tunes in the 'News Chronicle' English versus American dance record competition and has translated them into pictorial designs. The melody may be expressed in curves; circles or straight lines which when repeated in a strip reveal the rhythm. The bass usually takes a similar form on the lower part of the screen while the orchestration takes on more nebulous but none the less related shapes in the background. The whole forms a definite pictorial pattern design. Now look at the rhythmisms of the four tunes in the 'News Chronicle' English versus American dance music competition. The American tunes have more vitality and they are accordingly expressed in rhythmisms in harder and more definite rhythmic forms... From the point of view of rhythmism, the American tune, Guy Lombardo's 'Young And Healthy' is the most interesting. I have tried to catch the rhythm in oblique forceful lines, rising and falling like the piston rod of a locomotive. The thick black line to the right is where the voice of Bing Crosby, the crooner, follows the melody. The pairs of parallel black lines which strike across the bottom of the design represent two notes which keep breaking across the music as if to emphasise the onward drive'.

It will already have dawned on some of you that the 'Lombardo/ Crosby team' was wearing an albatross as a necktie, in the shape of the BBC who had famously, banned the broadcast of 'Young And Healthy', on the grounds of its 'suggestive' lyric. The offending line being, 'In a year or two or three, maybe we will be too old'. Of course, it might be argued that the only chance to listen to this 'filth', in the privacy of your own home, would have provided a prime incentive to scour the shops for the record. So, it came as no surprise to read on the 28th April, 'Jack Hylton and Lew Stone have beaten Guy Lombardo and Wayne King, their American rivals, in the £1500 Dance Record Contest. The sales figures for the 'English' record were 27,730 and for the



'American' record, 19,758. An overwhelming victory for 'our side' but let us be realistic. Amid all the flag - waving, it would not have been too hard to forecast the result, had the competition been open to entrants from the US where 'Young And Healthy' had already reached No. 2 in the charts.

Unfortunately, there was no indication of when the name of the lucky winner of the competition would be revealed and another 300 pages of yellowing newsprint had to be scanned before this curious little story emerged.

Monday 15th May 1933 'The 'News Chronicle' today announces the result of the £1500 Dance Record Contest in which competitors were asked to forecast the sales of two famous 'News Chronicle' records, during the first six weeks after issue. First prize, V. Trundle of Wisbech - Estimate English 27,790 American 19,851. Mr. Vernon Trundle, the £1000 winner is a nineteen - year - old clerk and employed by the Wisbech Lighting & Waterworks Company. He is an accomplished musician, especially with the piano, banjo and mandolin. He is also devoted to the gramophone and owns all the latest Decca and Brunswick records. Asked what he would do with the money, he said that he had already passed two examinations in bookkeeping during the year and anticipates sitting for a further examination in June. A little of the cash, he said, will be used to prepare him for this but the bulk for the present will be safely invested'.

Which brings us back to the present day and to where this article began. After sixty - eight years,

does Mr. Trundle still survive and if so, does he realise that by appearing both in the National Press and this magazine, he will probably be the most famous banjo - playing bookkeeper in the World?

Lionel Pairpoint

(Editor: No sign of Mr. Trundle in Directory Enquiries for Wisbech although there appear to be a lot of his relatives there!)

THE HOLLYWOOD VICTORY CARAVAN

In 1942, someone had the bright idea of getting various Hollywood stars together and sending them out on tour to sell war bonds and raise funds for the Army Emergency Relief Fund and the Navy Relief Society, which were organisations designed to give financial aid to the families of men in service in case of emergency.

The list of stars taking part was breathtaking: - Desi Arnaz - Joan Bennett - Joan Blondell - Charles Boyer - James Cagney - Claudette Colbert - Jerry Colonna - Bing Crosby - Olivia De Havilland - Cary Grant - Charlotte Greenwood - Bob Hope - Frances Langford - Laurel and Hardy - Bert Lahr - Groucho Marx - Frank McHugh - Ray Middleton - Merle Oberon - Pat O'Brien - Eleanor Powell - Rise Stevens plus various starlets. It should be noted that Bing did not join the tour until May 5. Mark Sandrich was the Producer and Director whilst Alfred Newman was the Musical Director. Special music and lyrics were written by Jerome Kern, Johnny Mercer, Frank Loesser and Arthur Schwartz.

To launch the venture, there was Eleanor Roosevelt's reception on the White House lawn and then an all - night rehearsal of the show at Constitution Hall under the direction of Mark Sandrich. Apparently Mark had a real struggle to co - ordinate all the various personalities into one cohesive show by curtain - time the next night. The Caravan set out from Washington DC on April 26, 1942 and covered 13 cities.

Let's take up the story from the first show with an extract from 'The Secret Life of Bob Hope' by Arthur Marx.

> *" ....when Herb Golden reviewed the three hour star - filled extravaganza for Daily Variety on April 30, he labelled the show 'Bob Hope's Victory Caravan'. The critic wasn't too enthusiastic about the show in its entirety, but about Bob Hope's contribution he had no reservations. As long as Hope was on the stage, the show had zest and lift. With his departure, it dropped to various levels of mediocrity.*
>
> *After Washington, the Victory Caravan show played to packed houses in Madison Square Garden in New York City, the Boston Garden, and various civic auditoriums in Philadelphia, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Louis, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Des Moines, Houston, and Dallas. In addition to his work in the Caravan, and keeping the cast energized between performances with his wisecracking, Hope made Tuesday departures from the tour to do his radio broadcasts (usually in Army camps) and perform in golf benefits with Crosby.*
>
> *As often as he could, Hope returned to the Caravan train at night to sleep and enjoy the camaraderie of the other stars. Hope particularly enjoyed singing barbershop quartets with Crosby, Groucho and whomever else they could dig up to sing bass.*
>
> *"One night we were in a restaurant," remembers Groucho, "and the three of us started singing barbershop style again. But we needed a fourth to make it a quartet. So Bing went from table to table trying to recruit a bass. Everyone turned him down. I've often thought how ironic it was that the most famous singer in the world had to lower himself by pleading with customers to sing along with him. Perhaps they didn't recognize him - without his toupee."*
>
> *.....By the time the Caravan arrived in Minneapolis, the travelers were so sick of life in those cramped train compartments that Hope and Crosby rented several floors of the Nordic Hotel for the cast and other members of the troupe to enjoy a night's sleep in a real bed.*

Bing's first performance was at Chicago and this time we use an extract from the book 'Cagney by Cagney' written, as you would expect, by James Cagney to tell the story.

> *Another group occupying my attention in 1942 was the Actor's Committee of the National Victory Committee. As chairman of that unit I can attest we did a lot of night work. I remember Porter Hall saying that our epitaph should read, "Committed to death." But it was little enough what we were doing for the war effort, and as was only fitting, a number of us were called together to go out on the road to plug the sale of war bonds. This was the Victory Caravan, which went cross country for three*

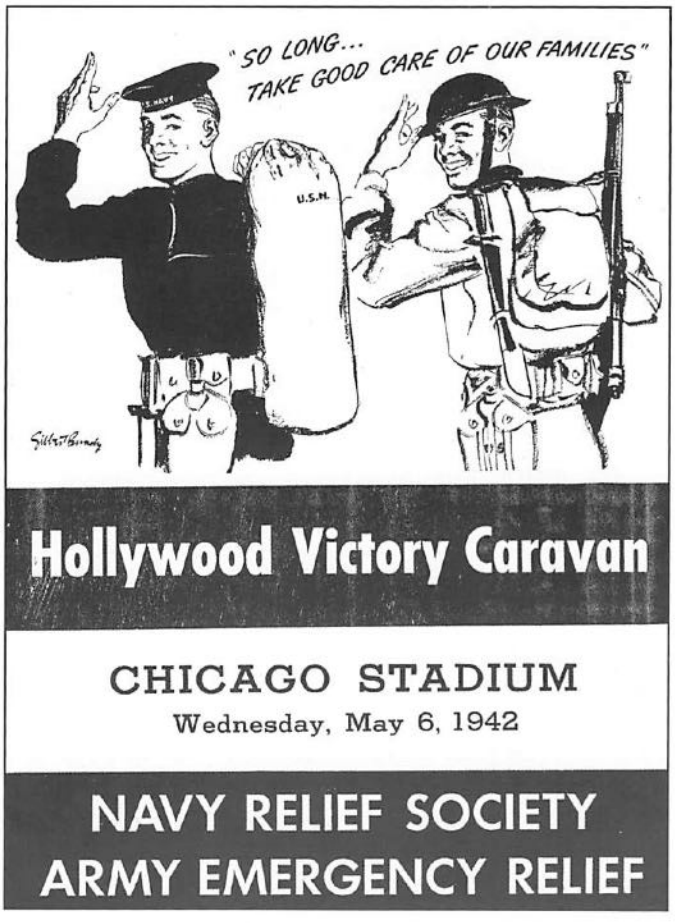
weeks. We had quite a group. There were, Cary Grant, Pat O'Brien, Frank McHugh, Laurel and Hardy, Bert Lahr, Groucho Marx, Charles Boyer, and others, plus the most beautiful assembly of girls anybody ever cast an eye upon. Among them were Claudette Colbert, Joan Bennett, Arlene Whelan, Olivia de Havilland - such beauties. Bob Hope was our emcee until Chicago where Bing Crosby took over.

I had never worked with Bing before, and here was a great opportunity see first hand how this great entertainer did it. Bing had always been a remarkable fella to me, and I had always thought that everything he did was so relaxed and effortless. Not so. At our opening show at Soldier Field, Chicago, there was a crowd of 130,000 with 30,000 of them behind the platform we were working. Bob Hope was doing his stuff and he said, "Well, I know you're waiting to hear the Groaner - " and the place went crazy. Bing walked out to a reception for which the adjective, 'triumphant' is inadequate.

He stood there in that very humble charming way of his, wearing a brass buttoned blue coat, rust trousers, brown and white shoes, and a light green shirt that seemed to verify the legend that he's color blind. After the explosion died down, Bing said," Whadda yez wanna hear?" and they blew up again. Finally he said, "Ya wanna leave it to me?" and they exploded again, until the walls of the stadium nearly buckled. Finally he said, "Hit me Al" and our orchestra leader, Al Newman started his boys off on "Blues in the Night". They had only played the first two bars when the audience went into rapturous applause once again. Bing finished that song, and never in my life have I heard anything like it. I got the traditional goose pimples just standing there, listening. He did another, same thing. And if ever I wanted a demonstration of how it felt to live that old vaudeville phrase 'What an act to follow' this was it. I was next on the, bill, waiting in the. wings to do my little stint 'Yankee Doodle Dandy'. Fortunately I had some good natural support in the form of my Civil War soldiers uniform, eight cute girls, plus eight American flags flying in the wind. I danced my brains out, the girls waved the flags energetically, the entire cast came out and joined in 'The Star Spangled Banner', and this was, I can tell you, an experience

But I've almost forgotten the point of this story, which is that when Bing came offstage, the perspiration on him was an absolute revelation to me. Here he had been to all appearances perfectly loose and relaxed, but not at all. He was giving everything he had in every note he sang, and the apparent effortless was a part of his very hard work.

James Cagney was probably mistaken about the venue and the size of the crowd as the following advert shows.



So now let Bob Hope take up the narrative from his book 'Confessions of a Hooker'.

"From Chicago we went by train to St. Paul, where Wally Mund, the professional at Midland Hills and a national officer in the PGA, had set up an exhibition match at Midland involving himself, Bing, me and Harry Cooper, who was then the golf pro at Golden Valley in suburban Minneapolis. We had a big party the night before at the Radisson Hotel. After about an hour I told Bing I had an invitation to a black - tie party at the Lowry Hotel in St. Paul. So I went over there, had a few drinks and fell asleep about 3 A.M. in a room they had for me.

At nine o'clock the next morning Bing called me. He said, "What are you doing?" I replied, "What do you mean what am I doing?" Bing said he was on the 1st tee at Midland, and ten thousand people were waiting for us to play. I told him I'd get there as fast as I could.

I jumped into a cab and hurried over to Midland, which is located between Minneapolis and St. Paul. They had a guy waiting there for me with a pair of shoes and a sweater..... My head was still ringing, but I shot 35 on the front 9.

My diary entries for Bing during this period read as follows:

1942

May 5 Bing joins the Hollywood Victory Caravan tour for the last seven shows of the tour. Mark Sandrich is the producer of the show and the orchestra is led by Alfred Newman.

May 6 First match (of five) in Bing and Bob Hope's PGA sponsored war relief golfing tour takes place at Edgewater Golf Club, Chicago. Bing and Chick Evans beat Hope and Tommy Armour 2 up. In the personal match between Bing and Hope, Bing wins 1 up. The match is restricted to 9 holes because of the meanderings of the overflow crowd. Footage of the event is included in the Paramount newsreel of May 12. Bing and Bob later take part in the Hollywood Victory Caravan show at the Chicago Stadium before a crowd of 19,823 and $90,000 is raised.

May 7 (starting at 2:30 p.m.) Bing and Bob Morse (trick shot artist) defeat Bob Hope and Johnny Manion (host club pro) one up at Meadowbrook Country Club, St. Louis. Hope loses special challenge match with Bing 2 and 1. The golf has to finish after 12 holes because of the unruly crowd of 2,000. Bob Hope's shot on the 8th hole hits a 5 year old girl in the head but fortunately she is not seriously hurt. Bob threatens to quit but Bing speaks to the crowd about the dangers of being hit by a golf ball. Bing and Bob go on to take part in the three hour Hollywood Victory Caravan Show at the Municipal Auditorium in St. Louis before a capacity audience of 12,000.

May 8 The Caravan travels to St. Paul and arrives at the Union station at 5:00 p.m. where civic dignitaries, 175 drum majors and majorettes plus a large crowd greet them on the station concourse. The Caravan then entrains for nearby Minneapolis. Bing and Bob Hope attend a party at the Radisson Hotel that night.

May 9 (starting at 10:00 a.m.) Golf with Bob Hope, Wally Mund and Harry Cooper at Midland Hills Country Club, St. Paul to raise money for the Army and Navy Relief Funds. Hope wins this time one up. The match is restricted to 12 holes because of the need to take part in a matinee show at 2:30 p.m. for the Victory Caravan at the Auditorium, St. Paul. A crowd of 10,000 watch the afternoon performance in the Auditorium.

Bing Crosby, who has traveled so many roads with Bob Hope to Zanzibar, to Singapore and other odd points, was in at the close with him. The audience took Crosby to its heart as a favorite prince no matter what he did. I have great admiration for his style in singing a song like "Blues in the Night". He has invented a way of doing this sort of thing that has perfect timing, neatness of touch, theatrical distinction. He has a pleasant urchin way of doing impudent imitations. He looks so innocent, so sleepy and is positively replete with guile. (James Gray, writing in the St. Paul Pioneer Press, May 10)

The troupe go on to give an evening performance at Minneapolis.

May 10 Matinee show at Des Moines before a capacity house of 4,300 after the first street parade of the tour is seen by an estimated 150,000.

May 11 The Victory Caravan train arrives in Dallas at 2:45 p.m. and is met by large crowds. The stars parade in open cars to the hotels. As soon as Bing and Merle Oberon get settled in their rooms, they immediately get out their golf clubs and go off together to the Brook Hollow club for a quick game. Commencing at 7:00 p.m. the stars parade by open car around the city on their way to the Fair Park Auditorium where the show starts at 8:30 p.m. The Caravan train sets out for Houston at 3:00 a.m. on May 12.

May 12 (9:30 a.m.) The Hollywood Victory Caravan train arrives at Union Station, Houston. Most of the stars remain on the train during the day. Starting at 8:30 p.m., Bing takes part in the final show by the Hollywood Victory Caravan at the Sam Houston Coliseum, Houston before a crowd of 12,000. In all 23 screen personalities take part in the three hour show and $65,000 is raised for the relief funds. As Bob Hope is broadcasting his radio show, Bing acts as m.c. until Hope arrives. Press reports state that Bing stops the show with his rendition of 'Blues in the Night'.

Bing himself did not give many interviews at this stage in his career but some months after taking part in the Victory Caravan tour he was prevailed upon to give an in - depth interview to Dick Mook which was printed in Silver Screen magazine of September 1942. Dick asked him about the Victory Caravan

Cary Grant and Bing consider a half dressed Pat O'Brien

and Bing responded:

"In addition to accomplishing its purpose, I think that every one connected with it had a barrel of fun, despite the adversities under which we lived and worked. There wasn't a single squawk about anything nor any unpleasantness of any kind. If you could have seen our Hollywood Glamour Girls like Claudette Colbert, Merle Oberon, Joan Bennett and Joan Blondell all jammed together, dressing in the ladies' rooms of auditoriums, doing it cheerfully and laughing and kidding with each other all the time, you'd know what I mean. If any one of them - or any of the male stars either - had been asked to put up with the inconveniences on a picture, for which they were being highly paid, that they endured with a laugh and for nothing on that trip, they'd have walked out of the picture.

I couldn't get away in time to start out with them, but I joined them later and played eight shows - Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Des Moines, Dallas and Houston. I fully expected to find a slipshod, haphazard show that had been hastily flung together, mediocre material, rough edges and a lot of bickering. Instead, I found a show that ran as smoothly as if it were being presented on ball - bearings, every one having fun, every one with first class material and playing to capacity business in the biggest theatre in town wherever we went. The show ran three hours and forty minutes without an intermission and there were all standees at every show the fire warden would permit.

We traveled and lived on a special train. When we reached a town, a police guard met us, we rode in a parade and then went to the theatre.....

A formidable barber shop quartet in action!

After the shows, the police escorted us back to the train, we'd have dinner and repair to the club car. There was a piano in it and the barber shop quartets and jam sessions started. Pat O'Brien usually closed the place up about six in the morning...."

Sounds like Bing enjoyed it! We did not have many press reports on the shows themselves but out of the blue recently I received a nice parcel from Charlie Baillie containing various bits and pieces including extracts from the Houston newspapers reviewing the Caravan show. So let's finish with extracts from The Houston Chronicle of May 13, 1942.

Jam - Packed Coliseum Greets Star - Studded Victory Show

Houston Contributes $65,000 as Its Share of Army and Navy Relief Fund.

Houston contributed $65,000 as its share of $560,000 raised by the Hollywood Victory Caravan on its 13 - city tour for the benefit of the combined army and navy relief funds.

And Houston had a good time doing it, for in return for their tickets, through which the greater portion of the fund was raised, Houstonians saw the biggest show that has ever been presented on a stage here. Practically every seat in the mammoth Coliseum was filled Tuesday night when Al Newman opened with the overture of patriotic airs, to start the three hour, star - studded revue. Then cadets from Ellington, naval R. O. T. C. from Rice Institute and sailors from the University of Houston, who had helped to police the lines so that the stars could be rushed into the Coliseum, were admitted to fill up the huge hall.

Houston was star conscious all day Tuesday. From early in the morning, a crowd was gathered in front of the Rice Hotel, waiting for a glimpse of their favorite stars. The Union Station was thronged when the special train arrived, and hundreds remained all day, when it was learned that the majority of stars would not leave the train until time to go to the show.

But they were less lucky than those people who just happened to be in Levy Brothers when Joan Blondell went on a shopping tour, or on the street when Jerry Colonna with his famous moustache, or Groucho Marx, without his, wandered by.

$1000 Tossed Onto Flag

Thousands of Houstonians had a good glimpse of the stars when they paraded down Texas Avenue to Main, and over to the Coliseum on the way to the show at 7 p.m. The streets were lined with a solid mass of people along the route of the parade, who cheered the stars, and tossed coins onto the big American flag carried by Boy Scouts. Two big buckets full of nickels, dimes and quarters, more than $1000, were collected by the Scouts for the relief fund. It took hours to count it.

The stars, although tired from their arduous tour, gave generously of their talent. They practically gave two shows during the evening, for in addition to presenting their acts on the improvised stage of the Coliseum, the majority of them repeated their performances in the Music Hall for the Ellington Field boys, who had been invited to the Bob Hope broadcast. Vivacious Joan Blondell, a native Texan, gave the boys a thrill with her comical striptease number.

Blondell Is Riot

This was one of the most popular numbers in the Caravan show, too. She has the right personality to put over the number and its comedy finish, when she is foiled in her ambition to become a 'stripper' by trouble with a faulty zipper, brought down the house. As an echo from this number, the 'women in defense' skit, in which Miss Blondell had trouble zipping up the zipper of the overalls was made much funnier.

The Houston audience was enthusiastic through most of the evening, cheering each of the stars as they appeared. At the close of the show, somewhat worn down by the heat and dazzled by so much talent, there were few cheers left, but the audience stood in tribute to the stars as they gave their patriotic finale.

Dramatic highlight

Charles Boyer's moving presentation of Daudet's eloquent 'The Last Class' was the dramatic highlight of the evening. Timely in the parallel of conditions in the seizure of Alsace and in the present occupation of France, the play has a deep significance.

At the close, Boyer paid tribute to his mother country as the cradle of liberty, and repeated his oath of allegiance to his new country.....

Most of the evening was frivolous, with Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Pat O'Brien and Cary Grant occupying the spotlight the greater part of the time. Crosby stopped the show with his crooning. 'Blues in the Night' called for an encore, and after Crosby sang 'Miss You' and 'Sweet Leilani' the audience still clamored for more. He could stop their applause only by going into a comedy skit with Bob Hope, giving impressions of captains of industry.

Fresh, New Comedy

Most of the comedy was fresh and new, with quips being taken at Houston weather, crowded conditions at Washington and Mrs. Roosevelt's extensive travels.

Charlotte Greenwood is another grand old trouper who received an ovation from the audience, with her comical 'Shall I Be an Old Man's Darling' song and her dance, which she finished with a bear - walk off the stage.

Another comedy highlight was an income tax skit staged with great skill by Bert Lahr and Cary Grant. Other comedy skits were staged by Olivia de Havilland and Groucho Marx, in a repetition of his 'Who's Olive' act from one of his pictures: by Frank McHugh and Fay McKenzie in a bedroom farce called 'Black - out': Laurel and Hardy in a comedy routine: Jerry Colonna, who convulsed the audience with his rendition of 'Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life' and Grouch Marx and the chorus in 'Doctor Hackenbuse'.

Bert Lahr clowns around for the benefit of Oliver Hardy, Bing and James Cagney behind the stage.

Rise Stevens Sings

Rise Stevens, Metropolitan Opera star, thrilled the audience with her rich contralto voice as she sang the popular aria from 'Samson and Delilah' with 'My Hero' from 'The Chocolate Soldier' as an encore.

Ray Middleton, baritone recently recruited from the concert stage for dramatic work in the films, and Frances Langford, radio blues singer, both introduced new songs written especially for the Caravan show, Middleton singing the rousing 'Spread Your Wings' and Miss Langford, the new Jerome Kern song, 'Windmill Under The Stars'.

Serious notes were introduced by the lovely Merle Oberon, who read a poem, 'The Little Men', and by Frank McHugh and Pat O'Brien in a Corregidor skit, which focused attention on the purpose behind the big Caravan tour.

Desi Arnaz, the Cuban good will ambassador, received enthusiastic applause from the audience with his Latin rhythms and his dance and drum solo. Claudette Colbert, breath - taking in a gorgeous white dress, received an ovation when she appeared with Cary Grant in a comedy skit.

Cute little Joan Bennett won favor with the audience too, as she appeared in a skit with Grant and Hope and later with Joan Blondell and Olivia de Havilland in the 'women in defense' skit.

The tap - dancing queen of the films, Eleanor Powell, gave the audience a thrill with a demonstration of her tap dancing technique, and enticed their co - operation in dancing 'Deep in the Heart of Texas'.

The show came to a rousing climax with James Cagney's fine impression of George M. Cohan singing 'It's Grand Old Flag' which he did with the chorus of starlets forming a background.

As the finale, the entire cast came out on the stage again to sing the national anthem, as the colors were presented by a marine guard.

Tribute to Newman

In a gracious and sincere gesture of appreciation, the stars tossed their flowers to Al Newman, music director of the show, when he made his bow at the end of the show. It was largely due to his efforts that the show ran so smoothly. Newman carried 14 key musicians with him and in each city hurriedly rehearsed local musicians to complete the 34 - piece orchestra. Sidney Lipman, the concert master with Newman's group, also was given an ovation when he was introduced as a native Houstonian. Director

Mark Sandrich kept in the background until the end of the show when he also took a bow.

Bing sits with starlets Frances Gifford (left) and Marie McDonald (top) while on tour with the Hollywood Victory Caravan

Starlets who added decorative touches to the show were Katherine Booth, Alma Carroll, Frances Gifford, Elyse Knox, Marie McDonald, Fay McKenzie, Juanita Stark and Arleen Whelan. The red - haired Miss Whelan from Brooklyn won the most applause when they were presented.
(Editor: What a show! 'Live Aid' seems tame by comparison. Interesting that both Rise Stevens and Frank McHugh were making 'Going My Way' with Bing the following year and I wonder if he asked for their inclusion following working with them on the Caravan? What wouldn't we pay to see a show like that again?)

PERRY COMO'S LAST HURRAH

When Perry Como died peacefully in his sleep in May at the age of 88, it was the end of an era. He was the last surviving member of the first generation of great popular singers - a line that ran all the way back to 1930s, through Dean Martin to Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra and of course, to Bing himself.

If Dean Martin was the epitome of "cool", Sinatra was the self - styled "Guvnor", Perry Como was Mr Casual. Famous for his relaxed style - relaxed to the point of seeming almost to be singing in his sleep - he was a low - key figure. It would be easy to overlook his impact on 20th century showbusiness.

So just what was it that made Perry Como a legend? The answer is television. Como was the first popular entertainer in the post - war years to see what the medium of the future would be. Not the wireless set, nor the movie screen, nor the music hall stage; the future was the little box that sat in the corner of the living room. The grainy black and white pictures were a world a way from today's digital images, but they were the road to tomorrow.

Como made the decision in 1948 to take his weekly radio show onto television. It was a big risk. Many of the established stars were dismissing TV as just a fad. Como was the first big star to make the switch and it worked. By 1955, Perry Como was the highest paid performer on television, anywhere in the world. The BBC took the show as did countless other networks around the world. The weekly shows ran until 1963 and even then, Como wasn't finished. His one off specials and Christmas shows continued until he was well into his eighties.

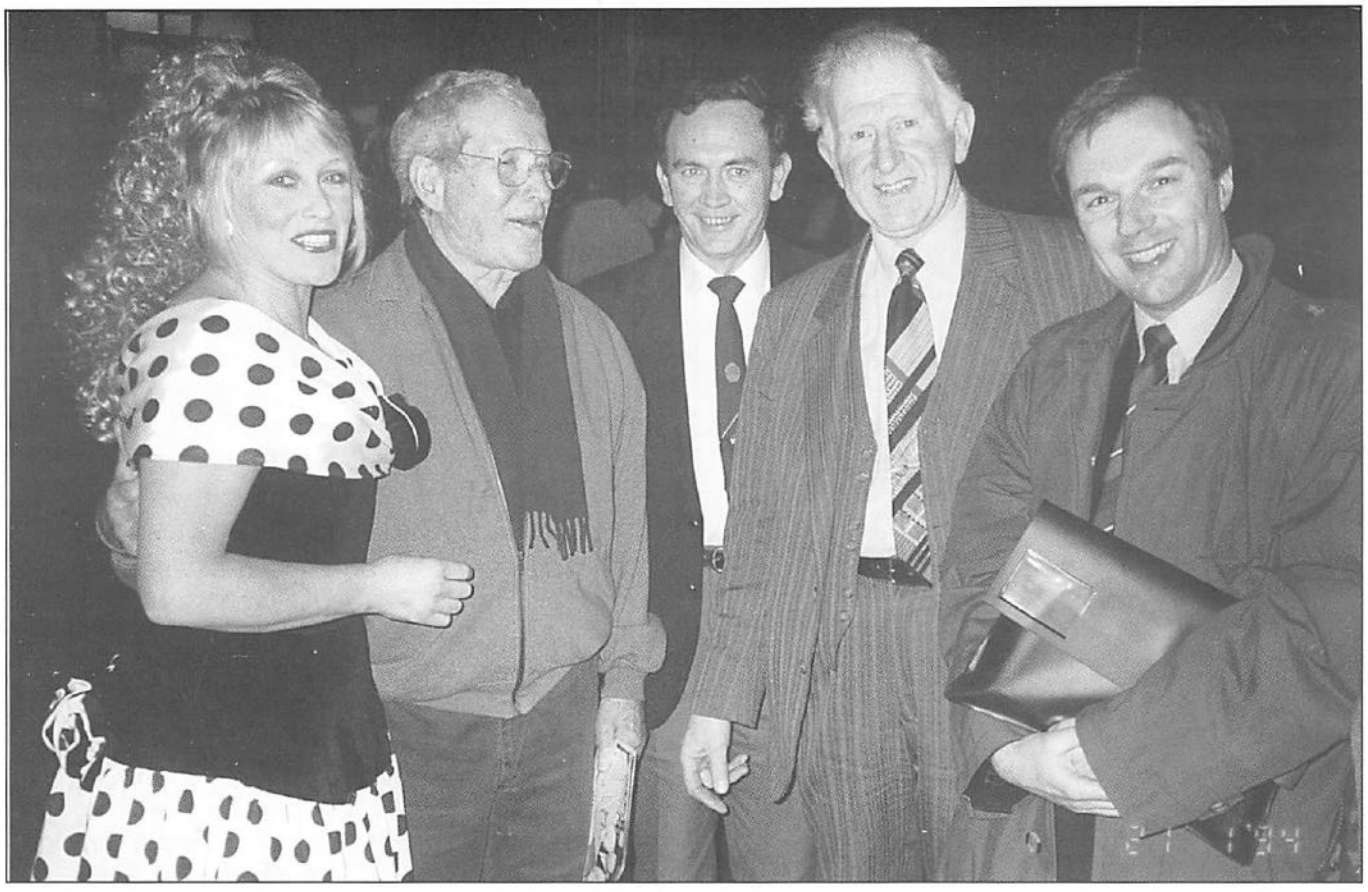
All of this exposure didn't harm his record sales, which ran into the hundreds of millions. "Magic Moments", "Catch A Falling Star" and in the 1970s, "Its Impossible" and "And I Love So". At an age when most people are thinking only of their pension and their bus pass, Perry Como was topping the charts and turning up on "Top of the Pops".

And Como's special magic? Simply this. He saw that television could take him into every living room in the country. He regarded himself as a guest in every home and what people wanted from their houseguest was someone with whom they would feel at ease. He was casual - the open neck shirt rather than the tux, he sang his songs from a chair or a stool and he had the air of a friend who had just stopped by. He was completely at home with the medium.

The early shows went out live, coast to coast, and frequently something would go wrong. Como would smile and maybe sing another song, but as often as not, he would let the viewer in on the act - grabbing the problematic cue card, or dragging one of the camera crew on to the set to explain the problem. His songs were bright, bouncy novelty tunes, not necessarily Gershwin or Cole Porter, but for television, just right.

His last hurrah came in 1994 at the Point Theatre in Dublin. Courtesy of George O'Reilly, I and several others ICC members were there, and indeed had the chance to meet the great man during rehearsals. It was one last Christmas show, and in truth, one bridge too far. They tried to combine a commercial concert with the complex production of a TV special and it was all too much for Perry. What's more, the sub - zero temperatures of Dublin in January had given him a cold, and he seemed all set to quit halfway through the show.

"I'll give it one last try" he told the audience, and



Caption: (l to r.) Irish star Twink, Perry Como, Joe Lynch (MD of Artane Boys Choir), George O'Reilly and Ken Crossland at the Point, January 21, 1994.

miraculously, the gods allowed him to roll back the years. For half an hour, he rattled off his greatest hits in a voice that came from thirty years back, and then he was gone, returning only to sign a few autographs at the end of a long day.

" I owe it all to Bing" he'd told us at a break in rehearsals. "If it wasn't for him, I'd still be cutting hair. I've been very lucky".

And so, Mr Como, have we.

Ken Crossland

Editor: A fitting tribute from Ken and how nice to be reminded of that memorable night in Dublin in 1994. I must admit to being surprised at the generally low key obituaries of Perry. As a record seller, he rated very highly indeed and I was amazed to find that, according to the Joel Whitburn book *A Century of Pop Music*, he enjoyed more Billboard single hits (31) than Frank Sinatra (17), Elvis Presley (24) and The Beatles (26). (Bing had 44 Billboard hits in the period from 1940 to 1956.) As Ken has said, Perry was a top TV performer but he made little impact in films appearing in three movies for Twentieth Century Fox *Something For The Boys* (1944), *Doll Face* (1945), *If I'm Lucky* (1946) and also the MGM film *Words and Music* (1948). He appeared with Bing on radio in 1950 guesting on Bing's Chesterfield Show on April 5 and then hosting Bing on his Supper Club programme on April 13. Many of us will remember those marvellous TV appearances in 1960 when Bing and Perry guested on each other's shows and sang several medleys of songs together. The Variety reviews of these were ecstatic as you will read:

> *Pairing Perry Corno with Bing Crosby may not be change - of - pace casting, but the two stars are masters of the song craft and joined together for a consistently pleasing and, of course, always relaxing musical session. It was the first time they had worked together and now Crosby is slated to play the Como show March 16 on NBC - TV on a home - and - home guest arrangement.*
>
> *It was perhaps inevitable that the Como - Crosby tandem would invite a script that laid on both performers' easygoing, if not somnolent, style. A couple of nifty laughs were extracted from this angle, but it was accented somewhat too heavily through the hour. Overall, however, the scripting team, headed by Crosby's veteran phrasemaker, Bill Morrow, turned out some typically smooth - riding persiflage for Der Bingle and his guest.*
>
> *In their song stints, done mostly in duet, C & C delivered with their trademarked casualness, with no effort to bowl over the*

viewer. The backgrounds were minimal, with some chorus boys used as occasional transitions as the baritone crooners worked through several long standard medleys.
(Variety, March 2, 1960)

The flip side of the C & C songalog is just as good as the original. Which means that Bing Crosby and Perry Como, in taking up last Wed. (16) on Kraft Music Hall just about where they left off a couple weeks previous on the Bingo ABC special, had themselves another ball as they cavorted through a mile - wide repertory. Practically half of the full - hour showcase was strictly from duet - and a more engaging earful would be hard to come by. They ranged all over the lot, from the "crazy songs" of the '20's as their forepart contribution, to an updated 15 - minute roundelay as the closer. All told it was a melodic and a tasteful production, geared for sight values and dressed up in NBC's finest compatible hues, with an appropriate genuflecting to St. Pat as Crosby, Como and guestar Genevieve frolicked on the tinted green. . . . Basically this was Bank Night for C & C. fans.
(Variety, March 23, 1960)

Perhaps the low - key obituaries owe much to Perry's style of singing and to his personal life. The obit on the Internet Movie Database starts as follows:

In a singing (and sometimes acting) career that spanned over six decades, the name Perry Como has come to mean that warm, smooth, easy - listening, general - audience, slow - flame romance that characterized

Bing and Perry together in 1960 (photo courtesy of Greg Van Beek)

popular music in the 1940s, '50s and '60s. It has also come to represent an overall good feeling. Telling of the success of the appeal of that good feeling early on in his career, during just a single week in the 1940s, the music industry pressed and sold 4 million Como records. In the 1950s, 11 of his singles sold well over 1 million copies each. . . .

Christened Pierino Como in Canonsburg, Pa. in 1912, and one of a family of 13 children, Perry pursued a career as a barber before he launched his singing career. He married his high school sweetheart, Roselle Beline in 1933 and they remained married until her death in 1998. Perry was a deeply religious man and there were no scandals in his personal life to make the headlines. In short, he led the kind of life to which we all aspire and sadly, as we know, that doesn't sell newspapers and make you into an icon. We shall miss him.

ONCE IN A WHILE

Other stars associated with Bing who have died since our last issue include:

Anthony Quinn, who left us in June at the age of 86. Quinn was born Antonio Quinones in Chihuahua, Mexico on April 21, 1915. His half - Irish father Francisco had married a Mexican girl of Aztec Indian ancestry, Manuela, while fighting for the revolutionary leader Pancho Villa. The family moved to El Paso, Texas, and three years later to Los Angeles in search of work. Quinn was raised in a poor district and never forgot his past. He studied for the priesthood until the age of 14 and then enjoyed a brief career in prizefighting before he took up acting lessons to rid himself of a stammer. His talents were soon discovered.

In a film career that spanned some sixty years, Quinn portrayed characters ranging from kings to Indians, including a Pope, a boxer and an artist. After being contracted to Paramount from 1936 to 1940, his career took off in the 1940s thanks to roles as Chief Crazy Horse in *They Died With Their Boots On* (1941) and as a Filipino guerilla in *Back To Bataan* (1945). He won his first Oscar as Supporting Actor for his work in the 1952 film *Viva Zapata!* as the brother of the Mexican revolutionary leader Emiliano Zapata. His role as the painter Paul Gauguin in the 1956 film *Lust for Life* earned him his second Oscar as Supporting Actor. Quinn put in a vibrant performance as an amoral bedouin chieftain in David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) but later, after leading roles became less frequent, he left Hollywood to live and work in Italy. Many will remember him for his portrayal of an earthy Greek peasant in *Zorba the Greek* (1964) for which he secured another Academy Award nomination. He worked with Bing in several films, *Waikiki Wedding* (1937), *Road to Singapore* (1940) and *Road to Morocco* (1942). Anthony Quinn married three

Anthony Quinn searches for Crosby and Hope in 'Road to Morocco'.

times and fathered a total of thirteen children.

Jack Lemmon died on June 27 at the age of 76. A Harvard graduate, he began as a stage actor in New York and he came to movie prominence when he won the Oscar for Best Supporting Actor for his role as Ensign Pulver in *Mister Roberts* (1960). He went on to be nominated for Oscars in six other films as well as winning the Best Actor award for *Save The Tiger* (1973). We cannot see that he ever worked with Bing although they both made guest appearances in *Pepe* (1960) and he is included here because of his long running association with Bing's Pro - am golf tournament at Pebble Beach. It would appear that Jack was a very keen golfer but was of "hacker" standard. In one interview, Bing described meeting Jack frequently in woods and hazards on the course and Jack has almost a page to himself in Dwayne Netland's book "The Crosby: Greatest Show In Golf."

Ted McMichael, the last of the founding brothers of the Merry Macs vocal group, died in March at the age of 92. Ted was the baritone and his brothers Judd and Joe sang tenor. The brothers sang under various names until they changed their name to the Merry Macs and hired Cheri McKay, the first of four women who sang melody for the group. Joe McMichael was killed in 1944 while fighting in WWII and a series of tenors took his place over the years. They had several hits in the early 40s including a number one with "Mairzy Doats" and top ten songs such as "Jingle, Jangle, Jingle", "Pretty Kitty Blue Eyes" and "Sentimental Journey". Amongst their occasional film appearances was a spot in Bing's film *Mr. Music* when they sang "Life Is So Peculiar". Bing rated the group very highly and when they opened at Victor Hugo's in Hollywood on June 23, 1940, he was there to introduce them from the stage, saying "they're the greatest singing organisation of their kind." They also recorded four sides with Bing in 1940, namely, "Do You Ever Think of Me", "You Made Me Love You", "Dolores" and "Pale Moon" as well as appearing in *Mail Call* shows #54 and #102 with him. Judd McMichael died in 1989.

Frankie Carle, pianist and composer of such hits as "Sunrise Serenade" and "Oh What It Seemed To Be" passed away in March. He had reached the good age of 97. Before he formed his own orchestra, he played with such greats as Gene Krupa and Jack Teagarden. He was the featured pianist when the Glen Gray and the Casa Loma Orchestra recorded his composition "Sunrise Serenade" and it reached number one in the charts in 1939. The song was also a hit for Glenn Miller and his Orchestra. Leading his own orchestra, Carle enjoyed several hits in the late 1940s including chart - topping successes with "Oh! What It Seemed To Be" and "Rumours Are Flying". Frankie appeared on Bing's Kraft Music Hall show of March 22, 1945 when he played piano solos of "Sweet Lorraine" and "Hindustan".

Toby Wing was 84 when she died in May. The London Daily Telegraph obit describes her as "the quintessential blonde, blue - eyed chorus girl. Although she had few lead roles, most of which were rather small, her looks ensured that she became a favourite of numerous producers and photographers during the early years of talking pictures. Indeed, she holds the record for appearing in more scenes while speaking less dialogue than any other Hollywood star." Her film roles included *The Kid From Spain* (1932), *42nd Street* (1933) and *Gold Diggers* of 1933 (1933). She more or less left showbusiness in 1940 having married the aviator Dick Merrill in 1938. Toby first crossed Bing's path in 1932 when she played Babe Kane's friend in the Sennett short *Blue of the Night*. She also had small parts in *College Humor* (1933) and *Too Much Harmony* (1933). Bing and Toby were frequently at the same Hollywood parties in the early 1930s and on July 1, 1937 she was a guest on Bing's Kraft Music Hall Show.

With Jack Oakie and Toby Wing

Ann Sothern, the actress also died in March, she was 92. She made her first film in 1927 and her last, *The Whales of August,* sixty years later. Ironically, it was for her last film that she received her only Oscar nomination, as best supporting actress, though she eventually lost to Olympia Dukakis. Generally she was in supporting roles and often played a scatterbrained blonde and in fact she was featured in a series of films based on a blonde named "Maisie" which enjoyed some success in the 1940s. Her most sophisticated role was in the 1949 film *A Letter to Three Wives* which starred Kirk Douglas.

She later went into television with *The Ann Sothern Show.* Ann Sothern appeared twice with Bing on the Kraft Music Hall in 1936 on February 27 and August 6.

Ted Rogers, died on May 2 at the age of 65 in St. Thomas's Hospital, London where he was being treated for a heart problem. A comedian who worked his way up the hard way, he appeared with Bing during the latter's 1976 and 1977 tours. He had been recommended to Bing by Perry Como who had seen him in a Royal Variety Performance. Ted's usual role in the "Bing Crosby and Friends" presentation was to sing a duet of "Gone Fishin'" with Bing and then to do his solo spot. He can be heard with Bing on the CD of the London Palladium Show of 1976. Following his appearances with Bing, Ted became the host of the British gameshow "3 - 2 - 1" which ran for many years and made him a household name in the UK.

Mike Sammes, who passed away in May at the age of 73, probably sang on more chart successes in the UK than any other performer yet his name is probably unknown to many of our readers. "There was a vocal backing on almost every hit record from the Fifties to the mid - Sixties," he said in an interview for BBC Radio Merseyside in 1994. However, his group, the Mike Sammes Singers, have only one entry in The Guinness Book of British Hit Singles, for "Somewhere My Love" in 1966. Sometime around the mid - 1950s, Sammes realised that providing vocal backings for other acts could be a career in its own right and he assembled the Mike Sammes Singers. In 1956 Guy Mitchell topped the US charts with "Singing the Blues" and Sammes assisted on a British cover version by Tommy Steele. Among the many other hit records featuring the Mike Sammes Singers are "No Other Love" (Ronnie Hilton), "A Handful of Songs" (Tommy Steele), "Why" and "Strawberry Fair" (Anthony Newley), "Walkin' Back to Happiness" (Helen Shapiro), "The Last Waltz" (Engelbert Humperdinck), "Green Green Grass of Home" and "Delilah" (Tom Jones) and "Tears" by Ken Dodd plus many hit songs for Cliff Richard. In 1969 John Lennon passed the tapes of the Beatles' *Let It Be* sessions to the American producer Phil Spector and asked him to turn them into an album. Spector added the Mike Sammes Singers to "The Long and Winding Road" and it became the Beatles' biggest - selling single in America.

The Mike Sammes Singers also worked with Tony Bennett, Ray Charles, Sammy Davis Jnr, Marlene Dietrich, Judy Garland, Barbra Streisand and Andy Williams. The Crosby connection? The Mike Sammes Singers were asked in 1962 by the arranger Robert Farnon to contribute to the musical soundtrack of the film *The Road To Hong Kong.* "The romantic song that Bing Crosby sang to Joan Collins was 'Let's Not Be Sensible', but he never sang the last word," Sammes said. He sang "And fall in . . ." and never got round to 'love' because something happened to him in the film. Bing was back in the States and they wanted the album out fast. After we did our oohs and aahs, we all sang "love" and they picked out mine for the record." Your Editor had not noticed this addition until some years after the record was issued but now I can never listen to the track without picking out that last word!

Bing Crosby - The Final Round

Francisco Prieto's journey to La Moraleja Golf Course in Madrid, Spain
by Greg Van Beek

What follows is an account of Bing Crosby's last round of golf and subsequent death on October 14, 1977. This account was first published in the Summer 2001 edition of BINGANG magazine and this is an abridged version of that article. It reveals for the first time Bing's true last words, the last song he sang, what he ate for his final meal, and other fascinating bits of trivia, enhanced by some new and never before seen photos. All was revealed by one of Bing's opponents during that final round, the last person to speak to him alive, Mr. Valentin Barrios. Told in the setting where it all took place, La Moraleja Golf Course in Madrid, Spain.

This remarkable story was made possible by a good friend of myself and my family, Francisco Prieto. I have known Francisco for over 15 years, through the business dealings he has had with my father (Francisco is a Los Angeles based US representative for a Spanish industrial machinery manufacturer). In that time, we have shared many good times during his frequent visits to Wisconsin, and he has remained a true and loyal friend. He's known of my interest in Bing Crosby for quite some time now, and knowing he spends a lot of time in Spain, I asked him once if he knew of the La Moraleja Golf Course. He replied "Yes, I've passed by it many times". I then told him that Bing died there after a round of golf. He was incredulous; he had no idea! Not wanting to impose, I simply asked if sometime when he was passing by, if he could pull off to the side of the road and take a photograph of the course for my collection. He did that - and a whole lot more! The story of how this exclusive interview with Valentin Barrios came about is almost as fascinating as the interview itself.

To begin, Francisco surprised me (which is an understatement) with the following e - mail on October 27, 2000 (in his own words):

"What a place!!! I arrived to Madrid from Los Angeles on Sunday morning (October 22) around nine as scheduled. I rented a red Seat Ibiza (1.9 SDI - Turbo Diesel), very nice and pretty fast - smooth for a diesel" (Francisco shares with me a love of automobiles - GVB). "I drove directly to La Moraleja, which is like a township with some of the most elegant villas, homes and mansions that I have ever seen. Sort of a Beverly Hills of old money (and probably some new). I got lost for a while in the many roads leading to the golf course. Finally I found it. There was no guard at the gate, which I thought was unusual, but I went inside with red Ibiza and all. Parked the little car in between the S - class Mercedes Benz's, Porsches, BMW's and even a Chrysler 300M! I walked to the Country Club house. Once inside a nice and pretty (to match) lady stopped me and asked what I was doing there. Obviously my poor attire did not match the elegance of the place. I explained the story about Bing's Fan Club, etc. She told me to refrain from photographing anything and kindly gave me the phone number for the Club manager. She told me to make an appointment to see him and he would (or would not) allow me to photograph the exact place where Bing fell.

I discretely took the car from the parking lot and left the Club. This time the guard was at the gate and he looked at me wondering how a humble "Seat Ibiza" (a Spanish compact car - GVB) was exiting the premises! Anyway, I guess I was lucky that the guard was distracted (actually absent) when I went in."

Francisco went back to see a Mr. Rafael Silvela de Alos (the General Manager of the club) on November 3 and in the days leading up to Francisco's appointment with Mr. Silvela, I did some research on Bing's trip to Spain, and events leading up to it. Bing had just completed a two week engagement at the London Palladium on October 8, 1977. He gave one more concert on October 10 at the Conference Center in Brighton, England. October 11, he recorded eight songs and an interview for BBC radio in the morning, along with a photo shoot for the album jacket of his recently completed 'Seasons' album that afternoon. Also on October 11, he dealt with the Police, upon discovering his London flat had been broken into and robbed during his concert in Brighton. On October 12, he played 11 holes at the Cranbrook golf course in Kent, (a course he was interested in buying), before returning to his London flat for a late afternoon interview with a journalist. Then, early on the morning of Thursday, October 13, he flew from London to Madrid for a four day recreational weekend of golf and hunting.

La Moraleja golf course is located in the La Moraleja residential complex, 8.8 kilometers ($5\frac{1}{2}$ miles) from Spain's capitol along the Madrid - Burgos national highway. The club was founded in 1975 and originally comprised an 18 - hole golf course, a smaller itinerary of nine, par - 3 holes, a putting green and practice ground, all designed and supervised by the famous American golfer Jack Nicklaus. In 1976, the facilities were joined by a clubhouse covering 8,500 square meters (almost 100,000 square feet) and containing a restaurant, cafeteria, game room, lounges, etc. Bing had never been to La Moraleja prior to the autumn of 1977, but no doubt it was at the urging of his good friend Jack Nicklaus that he decided to make the trip. I discovered that Bing knew a lot of people in the La Moraleja community, and may have hunted with some of them in previous years. This too may have been among the factors that brought him there.

Bing wasted no time upon arriving at La Moraleja on October 13 in getting out on the links. He was paired with the World (at the time) and Spanish golf champion Manuel Pinero. Their opponents were Cesar de Zulueta, President of La Moraleja, and Valentin Barrios. Mr. Pinero and Bing lost to Mr. de Zulueta and Mr. Barrios for that first match, with Bing carding a 92, but they were confident the 14th would be their "lucky day".

Getting back to Francisco's appointment with Rafael Silvela, Francisco phoned me from Newark, New Jersey on the evening of November 3, 2000, having just arrived from Spain, to tell me how it went. He told me he shot 3 floppy discs full of photos with his digital camera, inside and outside, based on the points of interest I suggested. He also said Mr. Silvela told him he was the Manager of La Moraleja in 1977, and lunched with Bing, Manuel Pinero and Cesar de Zulueta prior to the golf match on Friday, October 14!

Bing ate his last meal at 2 p.m. that afternoon and it consisted of a cup of chicken broth, a ham,

lettuce, and tomato sandwich, and a glass of water. Mr. Silvela said most of the conversation during that lunch centered around Saturday's planned partridge hunt. Bing was very particular about the type of rifle he wanted to use for the shoot. Several different types were shown to him, but Bing only would settle for a 20 gage. It had to be this or nothing! Bing took this partridge hunt seriously; he even bought a new $700 wardrobe for it, including a jacket, pants, hat, leather lace - up boots, thick hand - woven socks and a full range of accessories. Sadly, he would never get a chance to wear them. Following the partridge hunt, Bing had planned on flying to the island of Majorca for more golf before returning to California. Bing was planning on meeting with record producer Ken Barnes and Bob Hope upon his return home to routine songs for a planned duet album.

Following lunch, Bing spoke to journalists in the clubhouse, in what turned out to be his final interview. He was in good spirits, and reminisced freely about his long show business experience and said the movie "High Society" in which he starred with Frank Sinatra, Grace Kelly, and Louis Armstrong was "the most satisfying one of my career." He described his trip to Spain as a test of his recovery from the back injury he suffered March 3 (a ruptured disc caused by a 20 foot fall from a Pasadena, CA stage). He went on to say he was looking forward to teaming again with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour in "The Road To The Fountain of Youth". The biggest surprise (for me) of Francisco's visit came when he asked Mr. Silvela if he knew the whereabouts of the members of the foursome; Cesar de Zulueta (he died several years ago), Manuel Pinero (he's believed to still live in Madrid, but hasn't been to La Moraleja recently, although he plays the course from time to time), and Valentin Barrios. Mr. Silvela replied, "Valentin is one of our club pros - I'll call him!"

Within moments, Valentin Barrios, one of only two surviving members of that foursome (which included Bing), was standing in Mr. Silvela's office!At first, Mr. Barrios wasn't too willing to cooperate. "I'm a professional," he said, "I usually get paid for interviews and such." Francisco, never bashful, said, "Yes, but I have no money!" He explained to Mr. Barrios about the fan club, that we're listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as the oldest active fan club, and began to show him the questions I'd prepared and material I'd sent along. Both Mr. Silvela and Mr. Barrios were impressed, and Francisco believes it is only because I made sure he was well prepared for the visit that they agreed to continue. Both informed Francisco of a "Bing Crosby fund" set up at La Moraleja to send young caddies to school and for a few other charities. Mr. Silvela invited Mr. J. Javier Tejada Enriquez, the club controller, to join in and explain the charity foundation to him. The president of the foundation is Mr. Efifanio Ridruejo Brieva. He is also the current president of the La Moraleja Golf Course. Mr. Ridruejo is the second president of La Moraleja. The first was Mr. Cesar de Zulueta. Francisco told them perhaps our club could contribute to the fund at some point, and both Mr. Barrios and Mr. Silvela seemed pleased to hear this.

Valentin Barrios recalled Bing's final round of golf for Francisco:

> "He played very well and I know he enjoyed it very much. He told us he was feeling much better after his fall in California a few months earlier, and better still for being out on this beautiful golf course. He told me about some of his golf games as we played, about games with great pros like Ben Hogan, Gene Sarazen, Sam Snead, Gene Littler, Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus. He told a lot of little stories about each of them. Jack Nicklaus was his favorite, and I remember him telling me they planned a father and son match between them in a few weeks. Mr. Crosby said he was glad to have known all these great golfers. He was in good spirits; we joked about his white sun hat and old red cardigan. He was very relaxed, even at the second to last hole, when the score was even and he hit one into the sand trap. But he never lost his cool, still humming and whistling at the last hole. I remember he scored an 85, he and Manuel won by one stroke because of Bing's handicap, which was a 13, I believe. Bing collected his ten dollar prize before we headed back to the clubhouse. I remember too that he had a new Ben Hogan set of golf clubs for the round, but still used this old, ancient Hogan putter, which must've been his favorite."

Mr. Barrios then offered a never before told story, recalling the last song Bing ever sang:

> "There were some construction workers building a new house just off from the ninth hole. The workers recognized Bing, and motioned for him to come over to them. Bing was very happy to be recognized, and walked over to the men, who asked him for a song. The last song Bing Crosby sang, which I vividly remember, was "Strangers In The Night"."

It is unclear whether Bing voluntarily chose to sing this song, or if he asked the workers what they would like to hear and they chose it. Valentin Barrios took Francisco to the exact spot where the foursome was when Bing fell, which was only about 15 or 20 yards from the clubhouse entrance. Francisco noticed there was a steep hill leading from the 18th hole, to the walkway, and suggested that maybe climbing this hill caused Bing's heart attack to which Mr. Barios replied:

> "No, he was driven up the hill in a golf cart and only had a short distance to walk on flat, level ground. I was walking right along side of him, the last person to speak to him. He was very happy about winning the match. At the time, the pathway was a red - colored gravel, but it has since been paved over so the golf carts can drive on it easier. It still follows the same path we took that day.
>
> It has been widely quoted that Bing's last words were 'that was a great game of golf, fellas' or something to that effect. Well, he did say that in the golf cart heading up the hill, but afterwards, while walking towards the clubhouse entrance just seconds before his collapse, he spoke his true last words to me. He turned to me and said 'let's go have a Coca - Cola'. The next minute (around 6:30 pm), he lay face down on the red - brick path, landing on my foot when he fell. We turned him over, he was very pale, and had a large red bruise on his forehead where he hit the ground. He died at my feet - I knew he was dead right away, he died instantly.
>
> We carried him into the clubhouse and summoned the house Doctor (Dr. Laiseca). We called for an ambulance, just to make it look like he died en route to the hospital and not at the golf course. We all knew he was gone before the ambulance ever arrived. Dr. Laiseca showed me how to massage his heart, while he prepared an adrenalin injection, which was injected directly to his heart. I massaged his heart for over half an hour, but nothing could be done. He was dead - on - arrival at the Rena Victoria hospital (reports at the time say it was the Red Cross hospital, but Mr. Silvela and Mr. Barrios believe he was taken to the Rena Victoria, as it is the closest to La Moraleja - GVB). I could not believe it; I never would've imagined he would have a heart attack - he showed no signs of being tired or in pain or anything. All at once, he dropped dead. I'll never forget it."

Valentin Barrios points out the spot where Bing died.

Bing was administered the Sacraments of the Sick (last rites) at the hospital. Spain is predominantly a Catholic country, and Bing was a devout Catholic.

By now, it was time for Francisco to get to the airport so he could catch his flight to New York. Mr. Silvela gave him a booklet about the golf course, and they bid one another farewell. It goes without saying I am forever in Francisco's debt for doing this. I simply cannot thank him enough for his kindness, not only to me, but for all people interested in Bing Crosby; fans, biographers, and researchers alike. Also my thanks for the cooperation of Mr. Rafael Silvela and Mr. Valentin Barrios for being so open and candid for the benefit of Bing's fans.

It is important to note that Bing Crosby died the way we all can only hope to when our time comes - instantly and without pain or suffering. He died a happy, contented man - a winner to the end.

Greg Van Beek

Bert Bishop's
BING ON THE BOX

The dearth of Crosby movies for this period can be likened to the poor turn out at the recent election. On the one hand a lack of consideration by the programme planners and on the other considerable disinterest by the electorate. Where were our movies, and where were the voters? This situation is good for neither Crosbyphiles nor democracy. All those in favour of more Bing pics vote now!

So, it's almost with embarrassment that these pages note the meagre offering of *Robin And The 7 Hoods, High Society, The Country Girl* and *Let's Make Love*. Not a situation in the least bit satisfactory to either viewers or reviewers. But maybe a few words on the legend of Sherwood Forest, relocated in both time and place, might help a struggling columnist here, and remind readers of Bing's reforming influence as a belated intake to an otherwise dubious band of merrie men. Setting the scene with an unbilled guest appearance by Edward G. Robinson, who was well entrenched in the Chicago gangster mould long before James Cagney squashed a grapefruit in Mae Clarke's face, was enough to tell us what this film was all about - a musical spoof on the corruption of the prohibition era. The plot was weak and the humour slight, but it worked as entertainment because of it's star - studded cast and the memorable musical numbers, each one tailored to suit the individual talents of the performers. Only Sammy Davis Jnr. , with his gun toting dexterity, could have performed "Bang, Bang, Bang", and Sinatra's punchy delivery of "My Kind Of Town" was in the best tradition of his Nelson Riddle years. The dreamy Neapolitan, through a smoky, alcoholic haze dispatched pool table balls to all six pockets with consummate ease as he crooned his way through the only contemporary ballad; while Bing's three songs bore the hallmark of a man who could handle any kind of number that song writers Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen could come up with. Indeed, the set piece surrounding "Style" didn't really come to life until Mr. Crosby, as the erstwhile rather seedy Allan A. Dale, metamorphosed into an image of a man blessed with both 'style and charm'.

"Don't Be A Do - Badder" kept up a custom, first established in the mid 'Thirties, of Bing singing with, or to, children and displayed here many acquired mannerisms by his musical encouragement to a motley band of orphans in a long standing tradition of dispensing benevolent wisdom and upstanding morality to a captive, juvenile audience with amiable, though initially, pedantic bonhomie. Enough to prompt one little Puerto Rican boy to similarly suggest 'There's sump'n wrong with his throat!' in a reflection of the same comment by one of Robbo's' hoods as Allen A. Dale thanked the racketeers for the misplaced orphanage donation when he first crossed the threshold into their underworld. I'm sure Bing must have been responsible for the injection into the script of the mickey taking comment, by the same youngster, who later observed 'Boy, can he dance!' as Bing did his soft - shoe shuffle once described by himself as early Shirley Temple. That most of the children in that scene are now in their 'Fifties is a very sobering thought.

The gathering of the Clan to perform "Mr. Booze" was fortunate insofar as Crosby fans are concerned; for Bing conducts the proceedings on this revival number with masterly aplomb and delivers in a style liberally sprinkled with musical Crosbyisms that had the mesmerised Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jnr. missing their cues during rehearsals. 'Hey, man, we're listening to Bing!' was the latter's response on being rebuked by producer Frank Sinatra. Even so Dino still required a prompt by way of a nudge from The Guvnor in the final print. The religious fervour of the good preacher was matched only by the enthusiasm of his audience of sinners in their desire to repent in a mock meeting designed to foil the police raid on their den of iniquity. Even so, the polished performance on the commercial recording

outdoes even that cinematic set piece.

A final word on cast - eyed Peter Falk who in a wonderful over the top performance gave a preview of his studied mannerisms so eloquently displayed in his role reversal as Detective Columbo; a role destined at one time for none other than Bing himself.

DON'T FENCE ME IN

Indeed not: in fact our radio presenter data base is expanding all the time. New names and voices appearing on incoming cassettes with each and every passing month - Sarah Gonnell, Gary Copley, Henry Ayrton, Judy Spiers, Oliver Muldoon, Gerald Jackson. Names which may well be familiar to you in your wave band region. If so, and assuming you want to hear Mr. C on your receiver, let not thy reticence in writing deter you from requesting more Crosby please from these sympathetic purveyors of popular music. In the eighteen month run up to Bing's hundredth anniversary there should be a slowly mounting crescendo of requests culminating in an explosive reminder to the uninformed and, especially, the misinformed, of his undeniable significance, and influence, in the world of entertainment and music in particular.

I'm always impressed by the record programme presenters' ingenuity in creating a theme and illustrating it accordingly. The subject of feet is not one that would spring readily to mind as a basis for a musical evening . Yet "Happy Feet", "Shoe Shine Boy", "Flat Foot Floogie", "Feet Up, Pat Him On The Po Po", "Your Socks Don't Match", "Footloose And Fancy Free", "Feet Draggin' Blues" and "Your Feet's Too Big" are some of the obvious contenders for inclusion in a toe tapping anthology; five of which figure in Bing's musical portfolio. Subsequently, our thanks to Henry Ayrton for that far from pedestrian diversion.

"Magic Notes"
TRADE MARK
Columbia
THIS RECORD (MADE BY PATENTED PROCESS) MUST NOT BE SOLD BELOW PRICE FIXED BY PATENTEES
COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE CO., LIMITED — LONDON, E.C.1.
MADE IN ENGLAND
(W 149810.)
CB 86
HAPPY FEET, FOX TROT
(Theme Song, "King of Jazz")
(Yellen & Ager)
(Speed 78)
PAUL WHITEMAN and HIS ORCHESTRA
(With Vocal Chorus)
LAWRENCE WRIGHT MUSIC CO LONDON

GMR GERALD

Mr. Jackson is unstinting in his praise for Bing on his Greater Manchester 'Unforgettable' programme. "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" - 'wonderful'; "The Folks Who Live On The Hill" - 'my favourite'; "When You're Away" - 'the crooner of all time'; "Galway Bay" - 'isn't that beautiful!'; "Dancing In The Dark" - the greatest crooner ever' are just some of the songs and subsequent compliments. Whether or not you agree with the 'crooner' tag you cannot deny Gerald's enthusiasm and appreciation of a song well sung.

Another GMR Crosby sympathiser is Christine Prentice. In recent times she's been heavily into the Bing and Rosie tracks from the *Fancy Meeting You Here* selection, which is a wonderful album, but might be spread over a longer period of time to better effect. Interspersed with that tuneful travelogue were a few other tracks, notably "Pistol Packin' Mama" which, apparently was the number one song on a juke box in a Manchester pub frequented by lady munitions workers who voted it their top of the pops during its hey - day. First recorded by its composer, country and western performer Al Dexter, more or less a founder member of that genre of music, his own hit record was soon overtaken by the fine combination of the lively Vic Schoen arrangement, Bing and the Mesdames Andrews. Even more of a nail in the coffin for Dex was Bing's inspired ad lib which must have doubled the sales of the one we all know and love. This, of course, in a year bedeviled by the Petrillo strike.

SWEET AND LOWE

You could say "Sweet Is the Word For You" David Lowe, down there where the River Severn flows into Bridgwater Bay. His all request programme has a smashing selection of Crosby recordings - all down to his regular audience, of course. One of those being ICC member Len Hawkings who had two deliberately varied numbers played for Bing's birthday date: "When You're Away" and "My Honey's Lovin' Arms"; illustrating to the local listeners the Old Groaner's versatility in song. "What's New?" and "Down By The River" for Maggie's birthday along with "The Kiss In Your Eyes", for a couple who had heard it only the once many years ago but remembered it nonetheless, are just a few of the tracks asked for and played by David who's 'his/her interpretation' has become something of a vocal trademark. One further unusual track played and worth picking up on, though, is the soundtrack recording, with dialogue, of "Once And For Always" where Bing duets with Rhonda Fleming, a one time slightly hush - hush, possible candidate for the second Mrs. Crosby.

The ' - Just What I Wanted' special release CD

in the Harry Lillis series has brought a whole new style of Crosby to listeners of local radio. There can't have been too many, since the release of the LPs some thirty years ago, who have heard the singalong tracks previous to the five featured on this album. Trevor Fry, also Bristol, was one of several who delved into that short list and came up with the *doppelganger* ditty "Me And My Shadow" which, although part composed and performed by Al Jolson, was most famously presented by that languid tragedian of song, Ted Lewis. In a further selection that was to include the breezy "Anything You Can Do" and "Busy Doing Nothing", and some 'Thirties classics such as "Sweethearts", "Never In A Million Years" and "Down By The River" it can be seen that Trevor, who scarcely more than a year ago was one of the newer fellas, is now well entrenched in Crosby mode.

Bing's birthday was well remembered by most of the presenters - mostly down to members of course. Keith Fordyce was no exception recalling days gone by "When The World Was Young". Seems like only last week to me. As another song says; my how the years do fly! *The Fancy Meeting You Here* CD release has cropped up quite a bit and Keith was to say of the title track 'Terrifically cheerful. Really raises the spirit!'

Dewi Griffiths seems to go more for the show songs as featured on Crosby duets. From the 1924 show 'No, No Nanette' Bing and Connee with "Tea For Two" and from the all - time great Rodgers & Hammerstein score of 'Oklahoma' "People Will Say We're In Love", one of only three songs that Bing cut with Trudy Erwin.

MAN OF THE MONTH

No doubt who takes the prize for the most Crosby recordings this time around. Step forward Chris Robinson with well over fifty tracks! Bearing in mind that BING magazine is never re - cycled I'm not going to be responsible for the destruction of yet another small rain forest by writing about every one. The overview is that Chris doesn't have a theme, nor is there a trend. It's just 'pick 'n' mix' all the way with tracks as diverse as "Wa Da Da", "That's What Life Is All About", "Red River Valley", "Little Sir Echo" and "I'm Thinking Tonight Of My Blue Eyes".

This column likes to reflect some 'current affairs' and with the Astaire / Crosby duet of "Pick Yourself Up" it echoes Chris's dedication of this cheerful song to all farmers, particularly in the South and West, hit by the foot and mouth epidemic. Of the original "A Couple Of Song And Dance Men" Chris was to quote Bing on Fred Astaire as follows:

> "Style is a presence. Fred once said 'Bing dances as well as I sing', and I consider that high praise as Fred sings very well indeed. Whereas my taps sound like a sack of potatoes falling down stairs one at a time.
>
> Style is delivery, phrasing, pace and emphasis - but most of all presence; and Fred has that."

"Every time it rains, it rains, pennies from heaven." Well, in that case we should all be very rich stated Chris at the conclusion of that number - for we were still into wet weather mode at the time - giving his audience a follow up of "A Fella With An Umbrella" who was standing by as insurance against being pelted with pennies. And still pursuing his mystery year query Chris asked his listeners in what song Bing mentions his dog by name. Probably the only singer ever to do so. I daresay only the committed Crosbyphiles were able to answer that one before he played the track and supplied the answer. No need to repeat it here of course. Is there?

Just have to mention before taking our leave of Chris Croz Quiz the "Mississippi Mud" Rhythm Boys reunion track which I've only ever heard played on the wireless once before and that was courtesy of the late John Gunn, by personal request. Nearly ten minutes of excellent humour and pure musical nostalgia.

RIDDLE OF THE SOUNDS

When Bing recorded the up - tempo collection with Buddy Bregman the latter was not first choice for this musical response to the swinging Sinatra albums. Indeed, it was Frank's own big band accompaniment of Nelson Riddle who was favoured; but he was not available at the time. So Russell Davies tells us as he dipped into that collection to bring to his Sunday afternoon listeners on BBC Radio 2 "The Blue Room" and "I've Got Five Dollars". Both were recorded around 9 a.m. - 'Not exactly Sinatra hours', noted the Classics and Curiosities host, who also commented on "St. Louis Blues" as being a sign of Bing's seniority over Sinatra, having recorded the W. C. Handy title thirty - five years earlier than the crown prince. As both

takes of that track were cut around 3 a.m. in the morning it might be said that this was more like ["One For My Baby"] Sinatra hours. It might well have been true of Bing at the time as well, having no doubt been out celebrating the impending closure of his fourteen week run at the Paramount Theatre on the same day as the Ellington session.

The Nelson Riddle substitute cropped up a couple of times on Desmond Carrington's *Sounds Easy*, Sunday broadcast - also of national radio fame. "Let A Smile Be Your Umbrella" continued to reflect the musical recognition of the 'monsoon season' in the U.K.; as did "A Fella With An Umbrella". But the rains eventually gave way to that wonderful duet of the even more wonderful Johnny Mercer lyric to the outstanding song from 'Seven Brides For Seven Brothers'; "Spring, Spring, Spring" with, to follow, the lush exuberance of "Mountain Greenery", the second of the two Bregman backings.

'Barely getting through' was Bob Scobey's cornet on "Whispering" - a shimmy shake number from the 'Twenties declared Des; though he wouldn't have been cognisant of it at the time having celebrated his 73rd birthday this spring. At the tender age of one it is unlikely he would have been aware of "If I Had A Talking Picture Of You" either, but he 'recalled' it with affection. And of "Let's Not Be Sensible" he noted Joan Collins' tiny contribution, which is about the same duration as Grace Kelly's on "True Love", only more musical. Even more of a tiny contribution is Mike Sammes' interpolation of the one word 'love' at the conclusion of the record, for as all but the newest of new members will know this recording was lifted from the soundtrack of *Road To Hong Kong* and Bing didn't sing the last word, his lips being sealed with a kiss.

HUMAN STORIES

Well, they abound among the Bill & Angela Rennells' Kentish community, and so many of them have the Crosby connection. For example, there was the request from an erstwhile merchant sailor who wanted to celebrate, musically, his rescue from a watery grave fifty - nine years ago when his torpedoed petrol tanker slipped beneath the waves leaving him swimming in the North Atlantic. At the time of the impact the ship's radio was playing "Deep In The Heart Of Texas". [Strange, I always thought Jerry liked Der Bingle!] Clearly, music plays an important role in our life's recollections, and none could be more dramatic than that.

Meanwhile, a listener asking for "Love In Bloom" got more than he bargained for as the happy hosts played the radio show version on which he is accompanied by Spike Jones. Bing finds himself up against it in "The Whistler's Mother - In - Law", a lady who has just spoiled his intended relaxation by confiscating his fishing rods. As Mother - In - Law is an anagram of Woman Hitler [or vice versa] he should not have been surprised! Sorry all you lady readers of that ilk, but you will always be a part of a traditional humour no matter how lovely you are!

Crosby stalwarts Stan of Rothwell and Ian of Northfleet make their presence felt on this programme, and "Far Away Places" was typical of their requests. But from beyond the ICC a request for "I Love To Dance Like They Used To Dance" was 'phoned in by a lady listener who's husband, the late Ken Goldie, was a trombone player in the Pete Moore Orchestra during some of those sessions.

Of the more unusual recordings a Bing & Perry Como medley duet from one of their TV shows found its way on to the programme, courtesy of Angela herself, who is a known Crosbyphile. Husband Bill, picked up on a line from Sinatra's "These Foolish Things" by saying 'Nice of him to give Bing a plug'. The words in question being 'The song that Crosby sings; these foolish things remind me of you'.

LITTLE GOOSE

You can learn all sorts here, and this time it's courtesy of Paul Barnes who imparts the knowledge that the paragraph heading is the translation from the Italian of ocarina. "Sweet Potato Piper" was the incentive to pursue that little gem of information in a series of programmes that included four calendar tracks and a look at the poll for the top singers of all time. Calling on two from the top ten - Bing and Frank, plus Messrs. Martin and Davis - Paul played the wonderful "Mr. Booze" and "Style", both referred to earlier; the former a track I consider to be a serious rival to "Now You Has Jazz". Exorcising the "unfortunate" Robbie Williams version of "Have You Met Miss Jones?", as featured in the excellent film *Bridget Jones's Diary,* Barnsey called upon Mr. C to illustrate just how it should be sung. But, sadly, the current version will not go away I fear, which is a familiar situation that we've had to live with for a long time now. Lots of unusual Crosby this time around: "Be - bop Spoken Here"; "Pinetops Boogie"; "When The Folks High Up Do The Mean Low Down"; a very raw recording of "Witchcraft" and the V - Disc version of "Small Fry".

In playing a couple more Charlie Polloi tracks, referred to in the last edition of the magazine, Barnsey noted that he recorded "Learn To Croon" before Bing, who came along a month or so later to give Charlie the lesson he needed. Although the soundtrack was in the can about the same time as Charlie's release the film didn't make the screens until three months later when Bing made the first of those three 1933 versions. "Hustlin' And Bustlin' For Baby" was Polloi's second track and Paul didn't know the composer. It was actually Harry Woods who also wrote that other unusual, and much maligned song,

"We're A Couple Of Soldiers", which Bing and Eddie Lang put paid to for all time once their blow - up version leaked out.

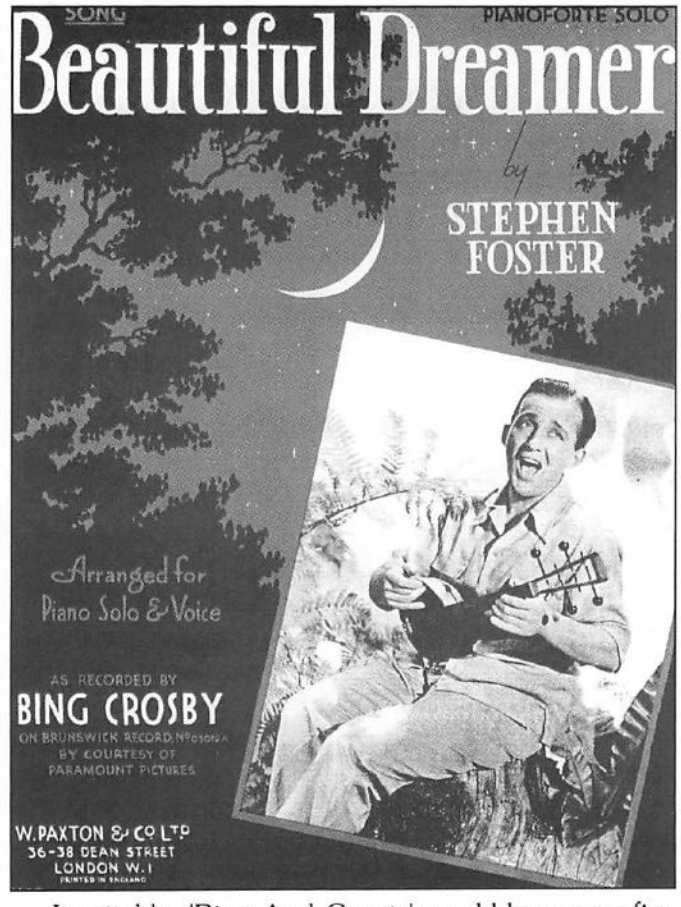
Another example of life's little human dramas occurred in *Gold For Grown Ups* [dubbed *Platinum For Pensioners* by one listener] when after playing the 1927 version of "You Took Advantage Of Me" Paul related how a young couple paid 5/ - for a flight in a bi - plane that year, but it was cancelled because of bad weather. Subsequently, the couple never did get off the ground until now, at 98, Flo, widowed for some years, was given her first flight in one of Paul's aircraft. What a wonderful, and rather poignant story!

Another of a number of the Whiteman era tracks featured was "The Five Step" of which Paul suggested Bing had laryngitis. Personally, I believe that Bing was adopting a pseudo Negro voice for effect as evinced by his line 'all God's chillun'. Though he was known to suffer colds from time to time, and went on to record regardless. Over forty tracks in the programme this time - not too far behind Chris Croz Quiz - and all great stuff!

AND THE ANGEL SINGS

Music and memories for the mature listener is the promise of the Angel Radio Friendship Club down there in Havant, Hampshire where Jim Reilly presents his now regular Bing Crosby programmes. The most recent of 'The Crosby Years' four - part series began with an hour's tribute to the late Leslie Gaylor which chronicled Leslie's remarkable life as Bing Crosby's number one U.K. fan. Jim was shrewd enough to contact personalities and presenters as a way of broadening the scope of his exposition on a lifelong devotee of every aspect of Bing's career. With contributions from Michael Crampton, Desmond Carrington, Stan White, David Jacobs, Ken Barnes and Hubert Gregg it may be imagined that little, if anything, was left unspoken about this gentle man who devoted most of his leisure hours to not only collecting but also promoting his hero. There were songs too, of course. No programme about Leslie could be complete without a track from what he, and others, consider as Bing's finest hour - 9th June 1933 - when he committed to wax four masterly vocals: "Learn To Croon"; "Moonstruck"; "My Love" and "I've Got To Pass Your House". "Moonstruck" and the latter feature on this programme along with eight other tracks, a CD or cassette of which is available to ICC members. I recommend it, especially as Leslie himself is heard reminiscing about his beloved Bing. Full details in Jim Reilly's 'Keeping Track' section.

Part 2 of 'The Crosby Years' was sub - titled 'The Song Writers' - in excess of eleven hundred who received the benefit of the Crosby voice. Irving Berlin opened the proceedings with "Be Careful, It's My Heart", the song that all who had anything to do with the production of the film *Holiday Inn* thought would be the number one hit. But even Berlin's 73 songs in the Crosby repertoire was eclipsed by Johnny Burke and Jimmy Van Heusen who had 80 numbers performed by the man for whom they wrote the most regularly: "It's Anybody's Spring" being one of two examples featured. Johnny Burke collaborated with several composers including Kahn Keene, Bean and Masters for "Scatterbrain" the only radio excerpt featured, on account of it being the signature tune of another Angel radio presenter. No programme on composers would be complete without Johnny Mercer, and his duetting with Bing on "Mister Meadowlark" was a wonderfully witty example of his work. Robin and Rainger; the Gershwins and Cole Porter were other principles included. Stephen Foster got a look in with "Beautiful Dreamer", and the Kern, Rodgers, Hammerstein triumvirate of stage musicals was well represented.



Inevitably, 'Bing And Guests' would be a sure fire selection for any programme theme on the Old Groaner and it must have been difficult for Jim to decide what to leave out rather than what to include in No. 3. Surprisingly no Satchmo nor Jolson, but he must have intrigued his listeners by the inclusion of Evelyn Knight and Jascha Heifetz whose names might have been a mystery to many. The ladies came off best with Judy Garland, Ann Blyth, Rosemary Clooney and Rhonda Fleming making appearances alongside Hope and Astaire as the only

other male members of an entertaining sixty minutes of entirely commercial recordings.

In the final part of the series, broadcast in March through April, the title 'Bing Sings Love Songs' gave rise to Jim's opening remark; "Love; where would we be without it?" Certainly song writers and composers would be hard put to maintain the high output and standard of melody and rhyme if confined to extolling the virtues of golfing and fishing. Although Bing started off with quite a few others that weren't built around amour either. "Wa - Da - Da" and "Constantinople" readily spring to mind, and even the grandeur of "Ol' Man River" and "Oh! What A Beautiful Morning" would be difficult to maintain without the inherent suggestion of love. Of the seventeen tracks in this hour of passionate melody no less than twelve were from Bing in the 1950's, the other five being no earlier than 1945. "True Love", "Young At Heart" and "If I Loved You" would be in most admirers' collection of Crosby in romantic mode; but I have to say that I was disappointed by there being nothing from Bing's classic years. Where were the likes of "Goodnight Sweetheart"; "How Deep Is The Ocean" and "Love Is Just Around The Corner"? The list is exquisitely considerable. And if Jim will allow me a small, further and hopefully constructive criticism, the injection of a couple of unrequited love songs might have balanced the reality of life. I'm talking, say, "Just One More Chance" rather than the ultra sombre "Black Moonlight". But if the 'across a crowded room' is more your bag then the likes of "Some Enchanted Evening" and "If You Love Me" were in there pitching the woo. In conclusion my thanks to Jim for making these programmes available not only to 87.9 FM listeners in Hampshire, and Channel Ten on Cable TV on the Isle of Wight, but also for four hours of pleasurable listening for myself, and the opportunity to share it with you in words.

FIELD DAY

The irrepressible Ron Field regularly e - mails me and sends me cassettes of his ongoing *Mainly Bing* programmes broadcast 'down under', and before going any further I have to correct a previous statement that his is a hospital programme. In fact it's broadcast from a one - time hospital building. The most recent tape was extra interesting as he had as his guest ICC member Les Street all the way over from Cardiff in Wales. The two got along like a house on fire and discussed many aspects of Crosbyana between some sixteen Bing tracks, and about ten others of associated stars of the silver screen. On everybody's lips these days is Gary Giddins' 'Pocketful Of Dreams' and this formed the basis for much of their chatty get together. Particularly emphasised was Gary Giddins' rebuttal of many of the controversial statements in Gary Crosby's infamous book. Unfortunately, mud sticks. But it is only right and proper that given the opportunity programmes such as Ron's should hammer home the contradictions and inaccuracies contained therein. Between them Ron and Les presented and enjoyed a very varied selection of songs ranging from "Were You Sincere" s/t version through "Shadows On The Window" to "With A Song In My Heart".

Talking of irrepressible, news from Arthur Blood is that he and the other half of the Likely Lads, Neil Robinson, will soon be back on Radio Derby as guests of Paul MacKenzie. Arthur was able to supply Paul with a copy of Dean Martin singing "If I Could Sing Like Bing" which is quite a fascinating tribute from around 1953. Paul followed this up with 'the real thing', notably "Moonlight Becomes You", later followed by "Some Enchanted Evening". Paul prefixes these tracks with a recording of an unannounced female heavily breathing into the microphone as she murmurs seductively; 'I haven't heard any Bing Crosby for what seems like an age. Oh, go on Paul, I want to hear Bing sing.' I don't know who she is but I think I'm in love!

In a later programme Paul featured the Autobiography version of "Learn To Croon" whence comes an identical ba - ba - ba - boo, ba - ba - ba - boo to that regularly employed by Paul Mackenzie himself. Again a track courtesy of Arthur, and from Neil some broadcasts which Paul feels he is unable to feature because of copyright. Have to say that others, notably Keith Skues, who played a whole show, don't seem to worry about this aspect of broadcasting too much.

Arthur kindly sent me a copy of the Gary Giddins interview on Joe Franklin's American radio show. Joe kicked off the show with "Lazy" noting that Bing was 'The King of Sing', always was and always will be. Asked by his host why Bing appears to have been passed by, overlooked, and the subject of 'hatchet' books. Gary responded by saying that a lot of this bad press was caused by sensationalised headlines blown up out of all proportion. During nine hours of interviewing Gary Crosby, Bing's biographer had him recanting on much of what he had allowed to be written. Indeed, much of what was in the book he couldn't remember ever saying. Giddins concluded that Bing was overwhelmingly a decent and admirable figure and was so much more like his 'image' than people now think. He was the most popular figure who ever lived and out sold Presley and the Beatles combined. 'It's impossible to imagine popular music without him because he influenced everybody.'

What more can be said?

Bert Bishop

Editor: Thanks, Bert for your comprehensive look at Bing on the Box. Gary Giddins was also interviewed on several other radio programmes in the USA including a superb one hosted by ICC member Arne Fogel. In addition, Gary was seen on TV too on the Charlie Rose show in April. Steven Lewis put his comments about this up on his Bing Crosby Internet Museum site and we gratefully reproduce them here.

"The Charlie Rose interview of Gary Giddins proved worth the wait. Gary's backpack was filled with Crosby anecdotes to illustrate for a new generation the influence and persona of Crosby. One of the more interesting moments for me in the interview was Gary's statement that Bing was worth only about $10 million at the time of his death, excluding any cash Bing still had stashed in his old golf shoes in the closet at Hillsborough.

Giddins' take on Crosby's greatest weakness? Lack of empathy, especially regarding the weakness of others. For example, Bing seemed incapable of grasping the manic - depression of one of his kids. Nevertheless, Giddins found Crosby's stoicism fascinating and often worthy of admiration, as when he abruptly backed away from alcoholism and cigarettes with seeming nonchalance.

Giddins documented that Bing was not the knee - jerk conservative that later generations projected onto him, thanks in part to Gary Crosby's need to sell his book and to Bing's defense of his daughter in the Barbara Walters' interview. Giddins cited, for example, Crosby's early support of the civil rights movement. We also know of Bing's opposition to the Vietnam War and his support for the legalization of marijuana. Crosby's unique brand of 'conservatism' will be further documented later this week at the Museum in two radio broadcasts in which Bing expresses his enthusiasm - not merely support - for taxation.

At one point Rose appeared surprised that there was a popular singer of broad influence before Sinatra. He seemed puzzled that Gary Giddins, of all people, should be writing about Bing Crosby, the Christmas caroler. But Giddins was relentless in the documentation of why Crosby was a worthy topic for a two - volume biography by a jazz critic."

Steven Lewis

Coverage of Gary's book was also heard in Canada as Ben Weaver reported to the Bing Crosby Internet Museum.

"A one hour interview with Gary Giddins was broadcast over our national Public Radio network [Canadian Broadcasting System] on April 29th. The interviewer was Michael Enright, who hosts a three hour program every Sunday morning. It's a very popular program in Canada and is also heard along the northern areas of the US. The interview and subjects covered were not unlike the Charlie Rose interview a few weeks ago.

Bing's early association with Louis Armstrong was covered as was his early development of a Jazz influence and "scat" singing. "Some of These Day's" was played as a good example of this. The Great Depression era was discussed and the song "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime" was played. The interview was very positive toward Bing's pioneering development of the singing of popular song's and of his great influence over the singers that followed him. The one hour seemed to pass much too quickly. It ended with the playing of Bing's theme song, "Where the Blue of The Night Meets The Gold of The Day". Michael Enright allowed how he grew up in a household that listened to Bing and that he was a great fan. There are many, many Canadians who feel the same way, including me."

Ben Weaver

(Editor: I had the pleasure of meeting Ben and his wife Sue in Vancouver in June and Sheldon O'Connell was there too. I'll tell you all about it in the next issue.)

"I listen a lot and talk less. You can't learn anything when you are talking" *Bing Crosby*

Keeping Track

A Compact Disc Review by Jim Reilly

When I first started writing these reviews I did not have much to report on, but suddenly they came flooding in and there are some eight new CDs for you to choose from. Unfortunately there is not much in the way of Bing songs that are new to the little shaving mirrors (as Hubert Gregg often refers to them as). Nevertheless it is good to learn that the *Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings* CD has done well since its release by Verve. I am also pleased to have the new Jonzo CDs to add to my collection. ASV has gone mad after a lot of inactivity on the Bing front with two new Crosby CDs and their issue of The Merry Macs CD.

Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings **Verve Records 314549367 - 2** **USA**

1. The Song Is You
2. Mountain Greenery
3. Cheek To Cheek
4. 'Deed I Do
5. Heat Wave
6. The Blue Room
7. Have You Met Miss Jones?
8. I've Got Five Dollars
9. They All Laughed
10. Nice Work If You Can Get It
11. September In The Rain
12. Jeepers Creepers

This is a new release of this Crosby album that was first issued on CD in 1996 in the form of a limited edition 24 carat gold collectors CD. The track running order varies on this Verve album which otherwise sounds pretty good to me. I understand that the album has sold well in America and has received good critical acclaim for Bing. Some members may think of it as rather pricey as there are only 12 titles on the CD but if one remembers that the gold disc cost in the region of £27.00 then this isn't quite so bad. This album triggered plenty of debate when it was first issued as an LP but I for one have always enjoyed it and think Bing swings well with Buddy Bregman. So, if you didn't get the gold collectors edition I recommend that you get this one now.

Running Time: 36:24 *Price: £13.99 - $17.99*

The Chronological Bing Crosby Volume 24 Jonzo Records JZCD - 24 **UK**
December 2, 1938 - March 10, 1939

1. Thine Alone (- A)
2. Thine Alone (- B)
3. Gypsy Love Song
4. I'm Falling In Love With Someone
5. My Melancholy Baby
6. I Cried For You (- B)
7. I Cried For You (- C)
8. The Lonesome Road
9. When The Bloom Is On The Sage
10. Between A Kiss And A Sigh
11. Just A Kid Named Joe (- A)
12. Just A Kid Named Joe (- B)
13. It's A Lonely Trail
14. Let's Tie The Old Forget - me - not
15. East Side Of Heaven
16. Hang Your Heart On A Hickory Limb (- A)
17. Hang Your Heart On A Hickory Limb (- B)
18. That Sly Old Gentleman
19. Sing A Song Of Sunbeams
20. Ida Sweet As Apple Cider (- B)
21. Ida Sweet As Apple Cider (- Fluff)
22. Poor Old Rover
23. Down By The Old Mill Stream (- A)
24. Down By The Old Mill Stream (- B)
25. Down By The Old Mill Stream (- C)

I don't know about you but I really look forward to the latest issues of this series and I certainly wasn't disappointed to get this one. The sound quality is excellent as we have come to expect and tracks 12, 21 and 25 are new to CD. Some people tell me that they are put off by the number of alternate takes but you are still getting good value with 18 song titles on this album and most music systems have a programming feature to enable you to select only those tracks you want to hear.

Running Time: 74.47 *Price: see below*

The Chronological Bing Crosby Volume 25 Jonzo Records JZCD - 25 **UK**
March 22 - June 9, 1939

1. Deep Purple (- A)
2. Deep Purple (- B)
3. Star Dust (- A)
4. Star Dust (- A)
14. S'Posin'
15. Whistling In The Wildwood
16. And The Angels Sing
17. Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams (- A)

5. God Bless America
6. The Star Spangled Banner
7. If I Had My Way
8. Little Sir Echo (- A)
9. Little Sir Echo (- B)
10. I Surrender Dear
11. I'm Building A Sailboat Of Dreams
12. Alla En El Rancho Grande (My Ranch)
13. It Must Be True
18. Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams (Fluff)
19. Girl Of My Dreams
20. Missouri Waltz (- A)
21. Missouri Waltz (- B)
22. Still The Bluebird Sings
23. Go Fly A Kite
24. A Man And His Dream
25. Just One More Chance

This is yet another excellent Jonzo release with tracks 2 and 4 being new to CD. It includes some of my favourite Bing songs. *Running Time: 74.11*

Jonzo 24 and 25 are only obtainable in the UK and the rest of Europe from Jonzo Records, PO Box 212, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 7LD. Price £10.70 each including pp. (or both for £21.10). Cheques to be made payable to Jonzo Records. USA and Canadian Members can obtain copies from Wig Wiggins (Address inside front cover).

Song Hits From The Movies 1930 To 1953 **Nimbus Records 2031** **UK**

1. So The Blackbirds And Blackbirds Got Together
2. Where The Blue Of The Night
3. Please
4. Black Moonlight
5. Pennies From Heaven
6. Sweet Leilani
7. The Pessimistic Character
8. Only Forever
9. White Christmas
10. The Road To Morocco
11. Moonlight Becomes You
12. Ain't Got A Dime To My Name
13. Sunday Monday Or Always
14. Is You Is Or Is You Ain't (Ma Baby)?
15. Going My Way
16. Swinging On A Star
17. Too - Ra - Loo - Ra - Loo - Ral
18. Ac - Cent - Tchu - Ate The Positive
19. Adeste Fideles
20. Put It There Pal
21. Country Style
22. If You Stub Your Toe On The Moon
23. De Camptown Races
24. The Whiffenpoof Song

This is the third of Robert Parker's stereo enhanced albums but I am not too keen on this form of reproduction. Call me old - fashioned because I prefer the original recordings and find this artificial stereo with its added echo not to my liking. Tracks 7, 21,22 and 23 have not had great exposure on CD but give me the real thing any day. From my point of view the best thing about the album is the sleeve notes that include some nine photographs of Bing.

Running Time: 72:30 *Price: £9.99*

Bing Crosby His Greatest Hits of the 30s **ASV Living Era CDAJA5349** **UK**

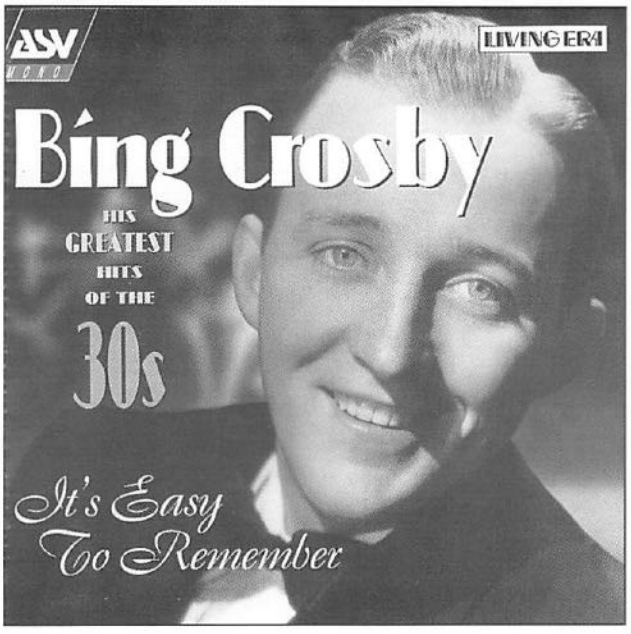
It's Easy To Remember

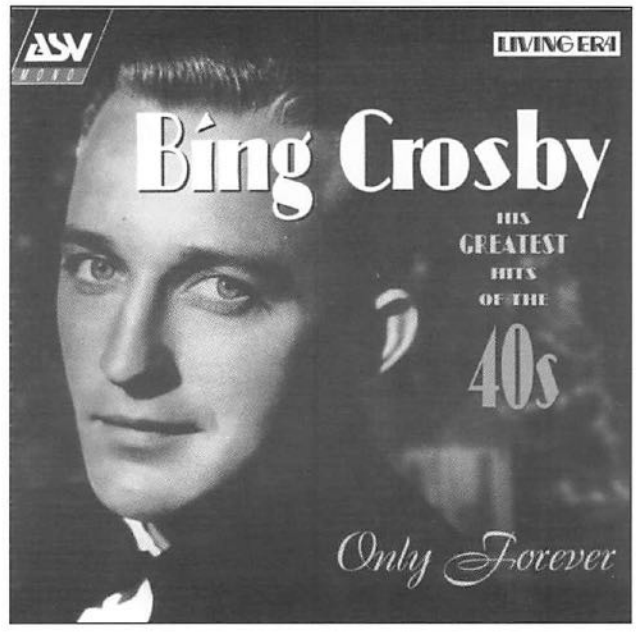
1. It's Easy To Remember
2. Out Of Nowhere
3. Just One More Chance
4. At Your Command
5. Dinah
6. Please
7. Brother Can You Spare A Dime?
8. You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me
9. The Shadow Waltz
10. Little Dutch Mill
11. Love In Bloom
12. June In January
13. Soon
14. Red Sails In The Sunset
15. I'm An Old Cowhand
16. Pennies From Heaven
17. Sweet Leilani
18. Too Marvellous For Words
19. The Moon Got In My Eyes
20. Bob White (Watcha Gonna Swing Tonight)*
21. I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams
22. Alexander's Ragtime Band*
23. You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby
24. An Apple For The Teacher*
25. Silent Night Holy Night (DLA261 - A)

*with Connee Boswell

This is a very nicely packaged album of Bing's hits from the thirties although any Crosby collector worth his salt will probably have all these titles many times already. However it is good to have so many of Bing' s No. 1 hits (tracks 1 - 14 and 16 - 23) on one commercial album. The only number one that they omitted was "Remember Me". I like the album, the sound reproduction is good throughout and ASV should be congratulated for putting this together. It would be remiss of me if I didn't point out a couple of errors in what otherwise are interesting notes written by Peter Dempsey 1) Bing's date of birth should be 3rd May 1903 and not the 2nd and 2) Bing only made six Mack Sennett shorts and not 8 as indicated - perhaps they included reissues?

Running Time: 76.24 *Price: £7.99*





Bing Crosby His Greatest Hits of the 40s **ASV Living Era CDAJA5395** **UK**

Only Forever

1. Only Forever
2. Sierra Sue
3. Trade Winds
4. Be Careful It's My Heart
5. Moonlight Becomes You
6. Sunday Monday Or Always
7. People Will Say We're In Love
8. Pistol Packin' Mama
9. San Fernando Valley
10. Swinging On A Star
11. I Love You (Porter)
12. Amor
13. I'll Be Seeing You
14. Too - Ra - Loo - Ra - Loo - Ral
15. Don't Fence Me In
16. It's Been A Long Long Time
17. I Can't Begin To Tell You
18. McNamara's Band
19. South America Take It Away
20. The Whiffenpoof Song
21. Galway Bay
22. Far Away Places
23. Dear Hearts And Gentle People
24. Now Is The Hour
25. White Christmas

My notes for the 'Hits of the Thirties' album equally apply to this CD; the quality is good, the package is nicely put together but any one who has been collecting Bing CDs for any time will probably have all of these titles many times before. By the way the only No. 1 that is missing from these titles is "(There'll Be A) Hot Time In The Town Of Berlin". It is a pleasant change to see the full recording information included when the trend these days seems to be to omit such details. Again Peter Dempsey's notes are interesting but the same two errors are perpetuated.

Running Time: 74.24 *Price: £7.99*

Bing Sings 20 Classics **Planet Media Entertainment PML 1092** **Germany**

1. Goodnight Sweetheart
2. Remember Me (shown as It's Easy To Remember)
3. Moonlight Becomes You
4. Pennies From Heaven
5. Brother Can You Spare A Dime?
6. Sweet Leilani
7. Don't Be That Way
8. How Deep Is The Ocean?
9. White Christmas (1942)
10. You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby
11. You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me
12. Sweet Georgia Brown
13. Only Forever
14. On The Sentimental Side
15. Too Marvellous For Words
16. Try A Little Tenderness
17. Star Dust (1931)
18. Don't Fence Me In
19. Too - Ra - Loo - Ra - Loo - Ral
20. I'm An Old Cowhand

This appears to be a pick & mix of the previous two albums with just a few variations thrown in for good measure. Again there is nothing new to CD. The quality is OK without being anything special but for £2.99 what can you expect? It would be nice if they had listed the titles correctly - for "It's Easy To Remember" read "Remember Me".

Running Time: 54.22 *Price: £2.99*

GUEST APPEARANCES

Bloomer Girl **Universal Classic Group 440 013 561 - 2** **USA**
Original Cast Album **(Decca Broadway)**
19 Tracks (2 Bing) Evelina and The Eagle And Me. The stars of this 1944 Harold Arlen - Yip Harburg musical were David Brook, Dooley Wilson and Celeste Holm and Bing's two titles are included on this CD as bonus tracks.
Running Time: 56.58 *Price: $18.99*

The Merry Macs - Mairzy Doats **ASV Lining Era CDAJA5393** **UK**
25 Tracks (4 Bing) Do You Ever Think Of Me, You Made Me Love You,. Dolores and Pale Moon
This is a pleasant CD from ASV that covers the period 1938 - 48. The sound quality is good and it is nice to have the four songs Bing recorded with the foursome on this album although all have appeared on CD previously. I can't say that I ever paid much attention to the Merry Macs and can only ever recall seeing them once when they appeared in Bing's film "Mr Music". They were a long running group with several changes in female personnel over the years. They had several chart successes in the USA including 'Jingle, Jangle, Jingle' at No. 4 in 1942 and 'Mairzy Doats' at No. 1 in 1944. The obituary of the last surviving member of the group can be found in the "Once In A While" section of this issue.
Running Time: 72:00 *Price £7.99*

Private CD or Audio Cassette - A Tribute To Leslie Gaylor
I made four programmes for Angel Community Radio when they had a licence in March on the Isle of Wight on FM radio. One of these was a special tribute to the late Leslie Gaylor with contributions from well known BBC Radio 2 presenters Desmond Carrington, David Jacobs, and Hubert Gregg. Other contributions were made by Ken Barnes, Stan White and Michael Crampton and I also included a small part of an interview Leslie gave a few years ago. A number of people asked me for a copy of this programme so I thought that I would give other members the opportunity of obtaining what is an unique tribute to Bing's greatest fan. The contents of the programme are as follows;

The Crosby Years
A Tribute To Leslie Gaylor **Presented by Jim Reilly on Angel Community Radio**
1. Theme, 2. Sing A Song Of Sunbeams, 3. Message from Michael Crampton, 4. I've Got To Pass Your House to Get To My House, 5. Message from Desmond Carrington, 6. The Last Roundup, 7. Message from Stan White, 8. They Can't Take That Away From Me, 9. Skylark, 10. Leslie Gaylor on TV, 11. Moonstruck, 12. Message from David Jacobs, 13. I Love You Samantha, 14. Ken Barnes talks about Leslie and Bing, 15. Embraceable You, 16. Give Me A Kiss To Build A Dream On, 17. Small Fry, 18. Message from Hubert Gregg, 19. Theme.
Running Time: 57:04 Price: CD £6.00
Cassette: £5.00
Please note that any profits from this private CD will be donated to Angel Community Radio, 4 Battens Way, Havant Hants PO9 2DX. I should also point out that Angel have recorded a further four of my programmes to be broadcast during their next 28 day licence in August this year and these will also be broadcast at the same time by their cable station on the Isle of Wight. I should also tell you that none of the presenters or people working for Angel gets paid for their efforts and they all do it on a voluntary basis.

AUDIO CASSETTES
I have been advised that the Mr Punch Audio Cassettes that I reported on in BING 123 (Winter 1999) are still available. New members might be interested so I have therefore repeated what I said in BING 123
Road To Hollywood / The Bells Of St Mary's **Mr Punch Cat. No. 99048** **UK**
Side 1 Road To Hollywood This consists mainly of the Philco Radio show of 29 January 1947 and includes: My Heart Goes Crazy, Comedy patter with Bob Hope, The Road To Hollywood sketch with Bob Hope, Dorothy Lamour and Ken Carpenter, Put It There Pal with Bob Hope, Tumbling Tumbleweeds, Sweet Violets* with Bob Hope, Road to Morocco with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour and Have I Told You Lately That I Love You (Parody)* with Bob Hope. *from later shows. The zany trio still makes me laugh whenever I hear them, as their comedy patter never appears to date. Maybe it is because it takes us back to days gone by and is pure nostalgia but I still find it funny and it therefore makes enjoyable listening and the quality is not bad.
Side 2 The Bells Of St Mary's This is most probably the Screen Guild Players radio programme sponsored by Camel of 6 October 1947. It also stars Ingrid Bergman and Joan Carroll. Bing sings snatches of 'In The Land Of Beginning Again', 'Aren't You Glad You're You' and 'The Bells Of St Mary's'. There is some distortion of the link music, although it did not spoil my listening enjoyment. 'The Bells Of St Mary's' has long been one of my favourite Crosby films so I was bound to enjoy hearing Father Chuck O'Malley narrating this sequel to 'Going My Way'.
Running Time: Approx. 1 hour. Price: £6.99

Philadelphia Story / Holiday Inn **Mr Punch Cat No. 99047** **UK**

Side 1 Philadelphia Story This is the radio adaptation of the 1940 film of the same name and it stars Cary Grant, Katherine Hepburn and James Stewart who also appeared in the film. I am sure that we all know that this was the story on which the film 'High Society' was based. The quality is good and although our man was not taking part I found it most enjoyable.

Side 2 Holiday Inn This would appear to be mainly from the radio programme of 11 January 1943 with the Screen Guild Players and Dinah Shore starring with Bing in an adaptation of the film 'Holiday Inn'. The actual radio programme seems to be padded to include some additional songs and includes: I'll Capture Your Heart with Fred Astaire, Lazy, White Christmas with Dinah Shore, Let's Start The New Year Right, Happy Holiday with Dinah Shore, Be Careful It's My Heart, Easter Parade and White Christmas sung by Dinah Shore (with Bing joining in at the end). There is some surface noise on one or two of the songs but generally the quality is fine and I again found this to be an enjoyable listening experience. Running Time: Approx. 1 hour. Price: £6.99

Once again I wish to thank those people who have advised me of new or re - issued CDs. I also must apologise to anyone that I failed to thank in writing. I do appreciate any such help even though I don't always show it. I also sincerely apologise to anyone who has not had a reply to their letter - it is down to me being very busy and not in the best of health.

Jim Reilly

Announcement

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

36th ANNUAL DINNER / MEETING

THE MANSION, ROUNDHAY PARK, LEEDS

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7th., 2001, 3pm - 10pm

SPECIAL GUESTS - ALAN FISHER and MOZELLE SEGER

A cordial and warm invitation is extended to all members, their partners and friends to attend our forthcoming dinner / meeting in the attractive setting of Roundhay Park, Leeds.

The dinner menu will be:

Fresh Scotch Salmon & Dill Mousse with Horseradish Creme Fraiche & Crisp Leaves, Bakers Basket of Mixed Bread Rolls

Roast Leg of Lamb served on a bed of Buttered Cabbage, Caramelised Onions & Crispy Bacon, with Seasonal Fresh Vegetables and Potatoes

Jam Roly Poly with Sauce Anglaise

Fresh Ground Coffee, Mint and Turkish Delight Selection

Please book by sending a cheque for £19.60 per person to Michael Crampton.
Accommodation may be available at Beechwood Hotel (tel. 0113 266 2578)
or Rydal Bank Hotel (tel. 0113 266 1178)

MOONLIGHT, MAGIC AND BING CROSBY MUSIC

Many of the contributors to BING magazine are probably aged over 40 (I'm being tactful!) and it is a interesting switch to have the views of one of the younger generation. Gillian Kelly is a 21 year old student studying *Media: Theory of Production* and one of our newer members. She has penned the following article and it is fascinating to read her perceptions of several of Bing's songs. She certainly listens to the lyrics carefully.

The fact is simple - Bing Crosby could really sing. There is however, a world of difference between being able to sell a song and making your talent endure throughout your lifetime and beyond. Crosby gave every song he sang a unique twist, with that well trained voice of his, that makes you know instantly who is singing and, amazingly, that same voice can still melt the coldest of hearts in the year 2001.

I was born in 1980, a few years after Bing's death, so it was my grandmother who listened to Crosby in his prime. But, listening to a selection of his recordings as I write this article, I realise how fresh and new these recordings sound, with some of them being at least 65 years old. That in itself is quite an achievement. I also realise how relevant the lyrics still are.

Bing certainly had that rare something you just cannot put your finger on, I can only compare it to the fact that we still read Dickens' novels and Shakespeare's plays. There seems to be some enjoyment we can all get out of these three gentlemen's work, no matter what our age, nationality or social class may be.

I have selected five of my favourite Bing recordings, with them I will try to explain why the world still loves Bing Crosby and cannot get enough of his golden vocals.

THE FOUR WINDS AND THE SEVEN SEAS

This hauntingly sad song was written by Hal David and Don Rodney, and recorded by Crosby in 1949. It is my personal favourite of all his songs as he seems to pour his whole self into the words, with a result that is breath - taking. Carmen Cavallaro's piano solo adds an extra twist to the Crosby vocals and, blended together, they create a timeless masterpiece which will strike a chord with anyone who has ever been forsaken. Another appealing aspect of the song is that there seems to always be a little something extra you pick up on with each additional listen. It is a number that I could never get bored of hearing.

HELLO YOUNG LOVERS

An entirely different, but no less appealing, song where old past love meets new fresh love through the eyes of an elder gentleman who has loved and lost long ago. Bing plays the part superbly, as he lectures the young lovers of the world to never let each other go. His voice takes on a new depth as he recalls, in a very reflective style, how he had a true love of his own once upon a time. His memories seem to be so pure and private that he does not share the details of his love, for fear of breaking the magic spell he seems to be under perhaps. He sings in a winsome style with a voice so full of emotion, and so quiet, that he may as well be talking to himself as all his memories come flooding back at once.

ANY TOWN IS PARIS WHEN YOU'RE YOUNG

A bittersweet song written by Tom Adair and John Scott Trotter which connotates the real mystery and magic of Paris sung by Bing who is backed by a wonderfully melodic SATB Chorus. The way Crosby tackles this number makes us really believe that if we are young and in love any old place really can have the golden glow of the French capital. The soothing blend of voices in the chorus intermingled with the clear, crisp tones of Crosby's creates a number which will stay with you hours after you have listened to it.

A QUIET GIRL

A simple, but elegantly beautiful, song from the first note of the solo guitar introduction to the very last note. The arrangement is clever enough to hold the listener's attention for the duration of the number while at the same time remaining pure and unprecocious. It is innocently and unashamedly a love song of the highest order as Bing serenades the girl he is very much in love with. The lyrics pay close attention to every tiny detail to illustrate his undying devotion, telling us about her eyes, her smile, and so on. However, the beautiful love song takes a very poignant twist near the end when we discover that that wonderful girl he is devoted to does not even exist. She is everything he has ever wanted but she only lives in his mind. This knowledge completely changes how the listener hears the song and pity overtakes any other emotion felt before that.

ROW ROW ROW

My last selection is an unusual little number recorded by Bing in 1951, but written way back in 1912 by William Jerome and James V Monaco. The song is very simple and tells of Johnny Jones and his boat and you can tell how much Bing enjoyed recording it just by listening to it. He is again wonderfully backed by John Scott Trotter and his Orchestra. In contrast to many other Crosby classics, this song is jolly and easy to listen to without feeling much emotion. *Row Row Row* is still as enjoyable to listen to today as back in 1951, and being written in 1912 that is quite amazing. Even though the way we say things has changed, for example, "...she'd jump in his boat and they'd spoon", "His steady girl was Flo" and "... sweet little peaches by the score." The general idea is there still and is relevant today, almost 90 years since it was originally penned. It can still bring a smile to your face too, which is the most important thing to remember.

So, in conclusion, Bing Crosby's unique and distinctive vocals and unusual phrasing have made his records timeless masterpieces that will never grow old or die, as so many fashions and fads pass us by through the years. Bing's recordings have a fresh and relevant quality today and also have the unique ability to manipulate the listener to believe every word that is sung. Bing had that rare quality that only legends are made of, showing that he was really a master of his craft who will be remembered for a long time to come.

As long there is moonlight, magic and young lovers, there will be Bing Crosby music.

Gillian Kelly

the HOLLYWOOD

PALACE

FOR

PRESENTATION ON ABC-TV

SATURDAY, JANUARY 16, 1965

PROGRAM

* NOTE: The position which an act is allotted on the program does not in the least reflect upon its merit. When a bill is made up almost exclusively of headliners — a frequent occurrence at the Hollywood Palace — every number is worthy of the "star spot" on ordinary vaudeville bills. It is only fair to the artist, therefore, to judge his work solely upon its merits. *

THE BIG TIME MARCHES ON! **FIRST ANNIVERSARY SHOW**

Our First Host **BING CROSBY** Is Back to Start Our Second Year

HOLLYWOOD'S MOST GLAMOROUS NAMES RETURN TO THE SCENE OF THE FUN

PLUS AN OUTSTANDING BILL INCLUDING:

From Rome **THREE REBERTES** CLOWNING ITALIAN STYLE

STAR OF THE BING CROSBY SHOW **FRANK McHUGH**

A Rare TV Treat From N. Y.'s City Center Ballet

The GREAT **JACQUES D'AMBOISE** With Catherine Mazzo

IT'S YOUR LAUGHTER **CORBETT MONICA** *HE'S AFTER*

ABC's Newest Stars **THE KING FAMILY** The King Sisters With Their Sons & Daughters

A Sneak Preview of Their Brand New Show

DREAM THE KINGS SING WITH BING

THE PARISIAN PLATE-SPINNER **LEONARDO** DISH MUST BE DA PLACE!

Bing's Lovely TV Missus **BEVERLY GARLAND** *WITH CROSBY & McHUGH*

In "I'll BET YOU'RE NOT HERE"

Bing & His All-Star Guests ★ ALL FORMER HOLLYWOOD PALACE HOSTS

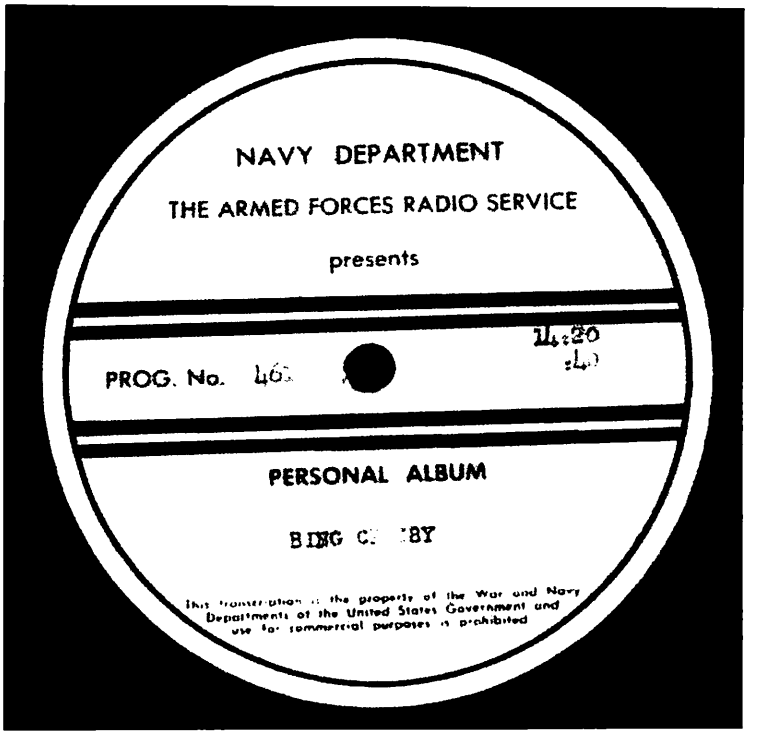
CUTTING THE CAKE AND SINGING "Happy Birthday to Us!"

Mitchell Ayres AND THE Hollywood Palace Orchestra

A ZODIAC PRODUCTION

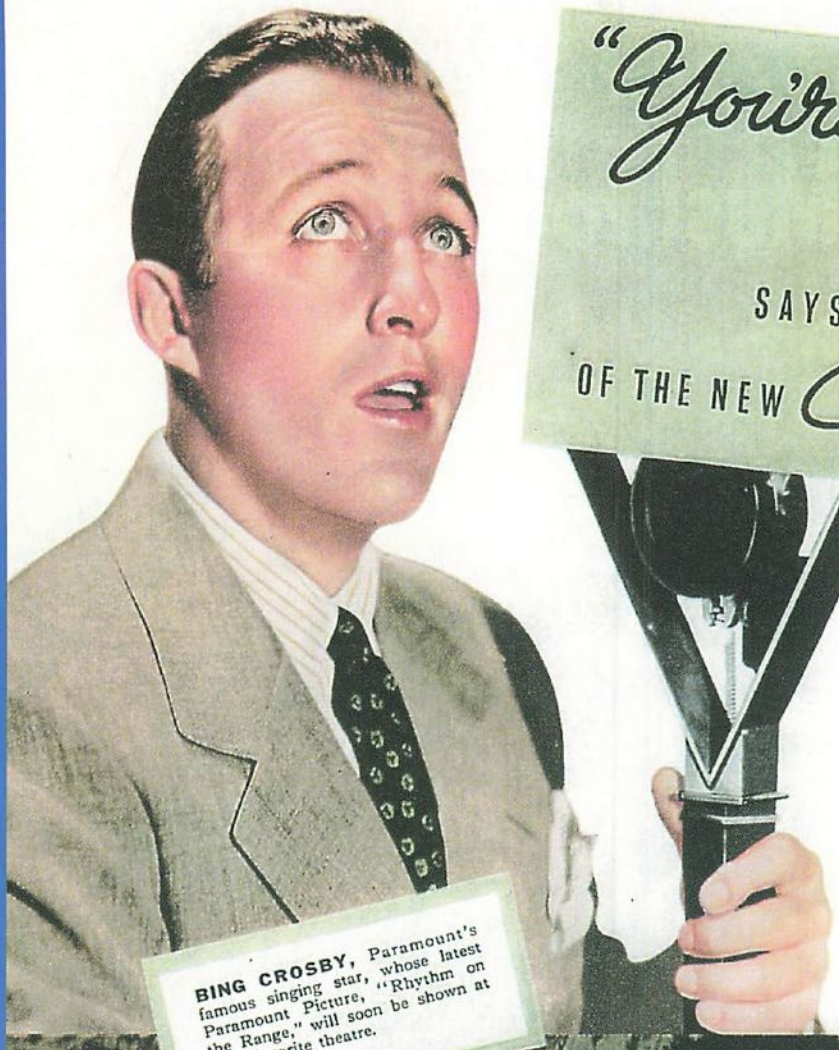
Executive Producer - NICK VANOFF

Producer - WILLIAM O. HARBACH


NAVY DEPARTMENT
THE ARMED FORCES RADIO SERVICE
presents
PROG. No. 46
11:20
PERSONAL ALBUM
BING CROSBY
This transcription is the property of the War and Navy Departments of the United States Government and use for commercial purposes is prohibited

"You're the new Sensation!"

SAYS BING CROSBY OF THE NEW Dodge BEAUTY WINNER



BING CROSBY, famous singing star, whose latest Paramount Picture, "Rhythm on the Range," will soon be shown at your favorite theatre.

"AM I enthusiastic about my new Dodge! Well, just show me another car that's so beautiful to look at and so economical to drive," says Bing Crosby, popular radio and screen star.

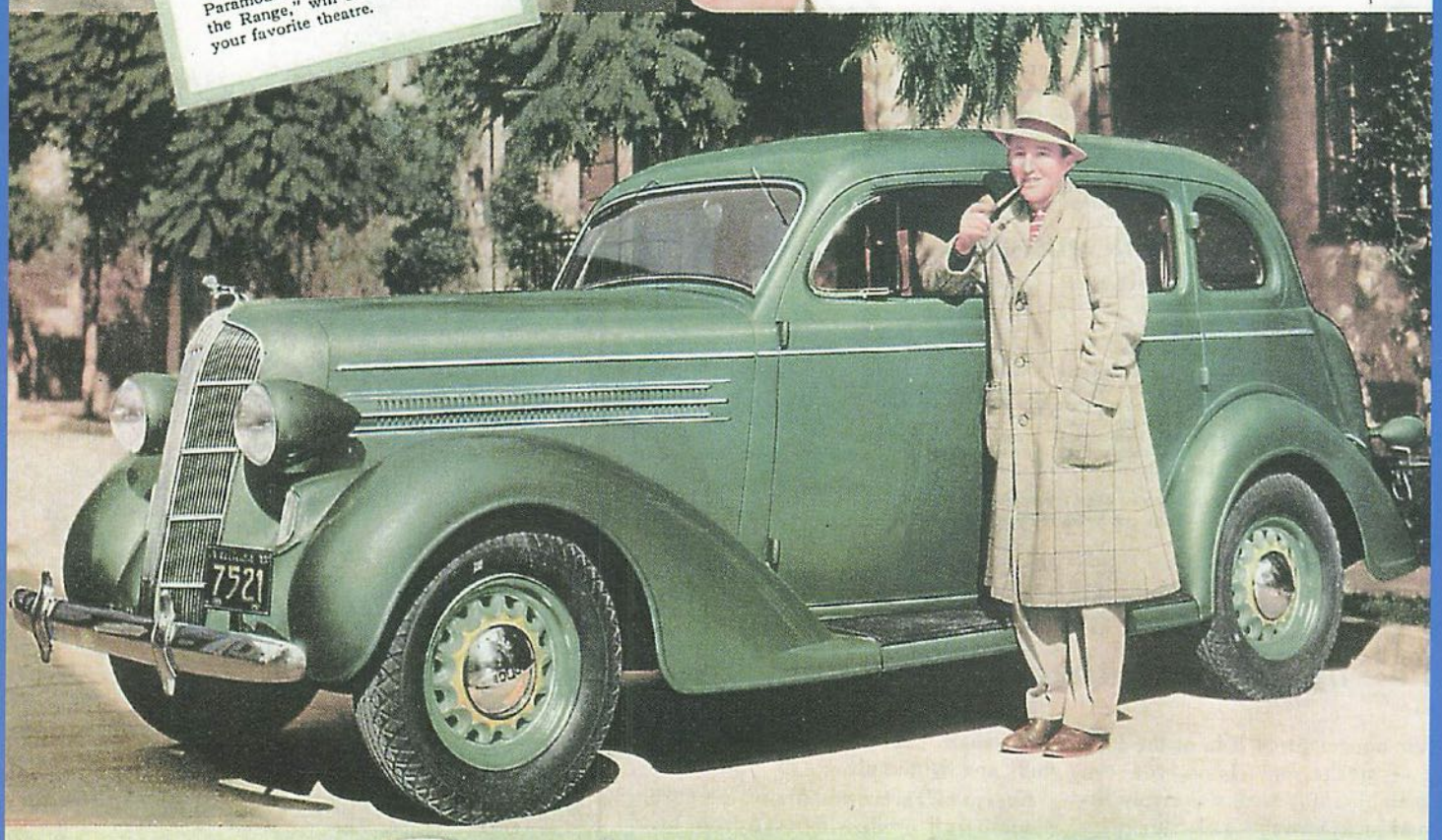
Thank you, Mr. Crosby! That seems to be the sentiment of thousands of Dodge owners throughout America who could well afford a much more expensive car—but they drive a Dodge "Beauty Winner."

Where else, they ask, will you find in one car all the advantages that Dodge gives you? . . . the famous Airglide-Ride . . . redistribution of weight equally to all four wheels . . . Chair-Height seats . . . patented Floating Power engine mountings . . . safety-steel body . . . *genuine* hydraulic brakes . . . roomier, more luxurious interiors . . . and sensationally low operating cost.

See this new Dodge! Drive it! And remember, Dodge—at new, low prices—now costs only a few dollars more than the lowest-priced cars!

DODGE

Division of Chrysler Corporation



BIG MONEY-SAVING Dodge AT NEW LOW PRICE—ONLY $640*

*Priced from $640 to $995. *List prices at factory, Detroit, subject to change without notice. Special equipment extra.*

Through the Official Chrysler Motors Commercial Credit Company New 6% Time Payment Plan you will find it easy and economical to arrange time payments to fit your budget.

Designed & Printed by City Printers (Chester-le-Street) Ltd., Ropery Lane, Co. Durham DH3 3NJ Tel: 0191 3883255